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[*Is there anything he can do about it now?*]

ED, PAGE 14

by Mickey Kaus

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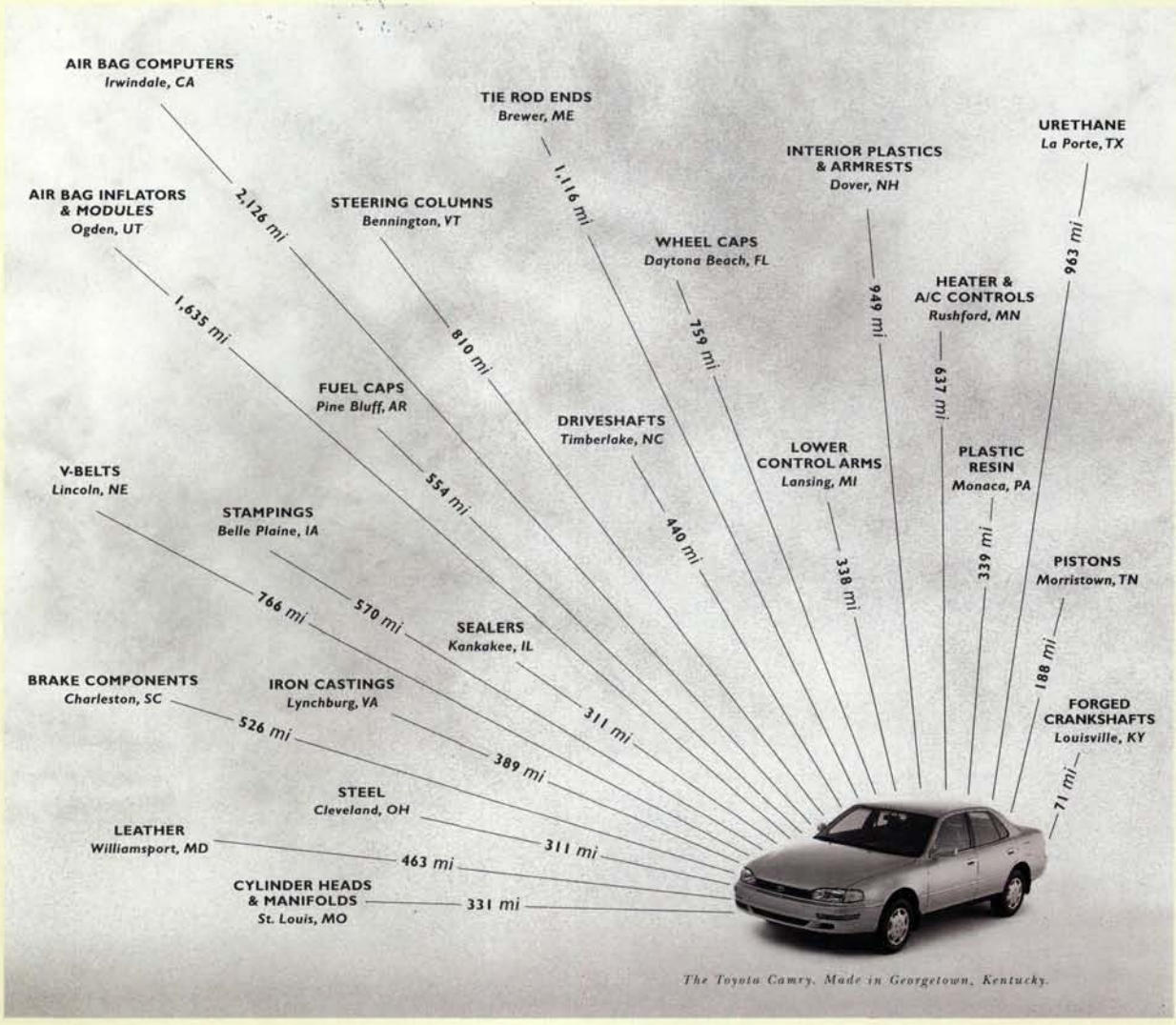

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A Weekly Journal of Opinion

DECEMBER 5, 1994

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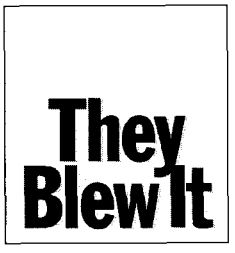

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CORRESPONDENCE

Elephantine

To the editors:
Please tell me that your November 7 issue, "The Republicans Cometh," was some sort of Halloween prank. Yes, the whole issue—from the cover to the feature articles by Judis, Rosin, Kosova and Barnes. I mean, really! No, Romney will not topple Kennedy, and NO, Gingrich will not become speaker. So why annoy us with your fantasies? My reading of the polling data leads me to these conclusions: in addition to Kennedy, other sure Democratic winners include Feinstein, Lautenberg, Sasser and Sarbanes. Overall, the Republicans will gain six seats in the Senate (and thirty-four in the House: sorry, Newt) for a fifty-fifty split. Remember, you heard it here first!

In these days of dwindling party loyalty with an anti-Democratic twist, why not write about how Democrats like Sasser (a Southern Democrat, a vanishing breed) or Feinstein or Lautenberg somehow managed to get re-elected? One thing I learned for sure from Kosova's article is that I won't be buying any more of Alvin Toffler's trash.

BLAIR EWING
Clarksville, Maryland

To the editors:
Newt Gingrich speaks about a liberating "opportunity society" and a "citizen activist leader system." But the story of his political epiphany—during which he realized the tremendous power of politicians and "concluded right then he'd rather make the decisions than live under the decisions of others"—is not at all about democratic participation and inclusion ("The Elephant Man" by Weston Kosova, November 7). In fact, it engenders the impression that Gingrich's attempt to oust those he considers "elites" has always been primarily a brilliant effort to establish himself in their place.

CHARLES J. WHALEN
Rhinebeck, New York

To the editors:
Fred Barnes is misleading in his portrayal of Newt Gingrich as a "relentless, issue-oriented" politician ("The Newtoids Cometh!" November 7). The only issues Gingrich is oriented toward are opposing Democrats and elevating himself to speaker of the House. Gingrich has made a name for himself not by implementing socially useful legislation, but by blocking attempts to do so.

As Weston Kosova writes in "The Elephant Man," Gingrich, throughout his political career, "was far more interested in seeding dissent and plotting his rise than in passing bills. In fifteen years in Congress, his legislative portfolio is paper thin." And this is the man we would have lead the most powerful legislative body in the world?

ASSAF RESNICK
Cupertino, California

To the editors:
As a lifelong Democrat, I take comfort in TNR's track record so far: predictions of triumph in your pages antedate most of the calamities in recent political history. Remember your cover story "Why Clinton Can't Win"? Remember that up-and-coming political wizard Joshua Steiner? Best of health, Newt! You just got the kiss of death.

MICHAEL TAGLIERI
New York, New York

To the editors:
If, in the Republican Party, Newt Gingrich is what passes for a statesman and Fred Barnes is what passes for a pundit, why does it surprise you that Bill Kristol is what passes for an intellectual?

JAMES A. BOSAKOWSKI
Cambridge, Massachusetts

To the editors:
I trust that you will treat the new leaders of our land—Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich—with the same skepticism, churlishness and downright hostility that you have subjected Bill Clinton to these past two years.

LILLIAN SPANGENBERG
Stevens Point, Wisconsin

Call and response

To the editors:
"Congress is a sophisticated machine engineered for responding instantly to the public whim, and it works fine." So says Alan Ehrenhalt in his review of *Arrogant Capital* by Kevin Phillips ("Bethesda Populism," November 7). It is difficult to imagine a more bizarre position.

Did the public demand farm subsidies, ranch subsidies, milk subsidies, honey subsidies, soil subsidies, logging subsidies and export subsidies, together with dams that benefit five farmers? Did the public demand country club prisons and welfare for drug addicts? Did the public demand that we loosen the banking laws and then pay for a titanic S&L bailout without bothering to punish those responsible for the disaster? Did the public demand that we sell sophisticated weapons to potential enemies that

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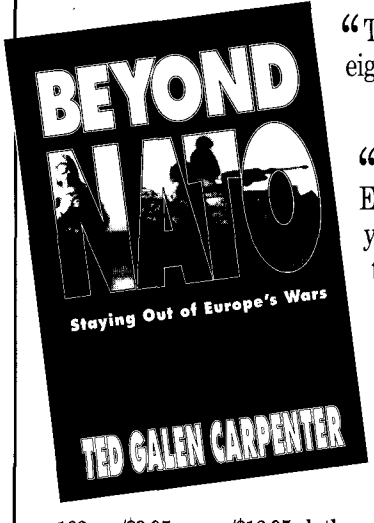
—Ronald Steel



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we must now arm ourselves against?

Is the success of the gun lobby evidence of citizen power? Congress may listen to single-issue fanatics, but will it listen to anyone else?

DALE L. GILLIS
Dunwoody, Georgia

Great dictatorship

To the editors:

Sean Wilentz shows a strangely ambivalent attitude toward *Dictatorship of Virtue*, which is to agree with its premises and reporting even as he expends most of his energy finding fault with it ("Sense and Sensitivity," October 31). Could it be that liberal academics feel the need to distance themselves from my critique of liberalism gone awry, while, at the same time, they do not wish to appear mawkishly P.C.? The effort to accomplish both goals at the same time has, in my view, given a desperate edge to the fault-finding. As a newspaper reporter, I went to dozens of venues as I researched *Dictatorship of Virtue*: sensitivity training sessions at *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the creation of an Afrocentric curriculum for a New Jersey public school system, to name just a couple. Yet Wilentz says that the book was written as if from within "a windowless padded chamber, connected to the outside world mainly through his notes and the NEXIS file." This accusation strikes me as a bit of a stretch.

Wilentz contends that my book would have been vastly better if I had talked more of Diop, Derrida, Hoftstader, et al., to explain the causes for the things I report. Does Wilentz believe anybody would benefit from another account of the nefarious French influence on the English department? I attempt in *Dictatorship of Virtue* to describe the growth of a sizable, self-interested multiculturalist bureaucracy whose very power stems from a disingenuous pose of powerlessness. This explanation of multiculturalism's rise just now, ignored by Wilentz, is not negligible.

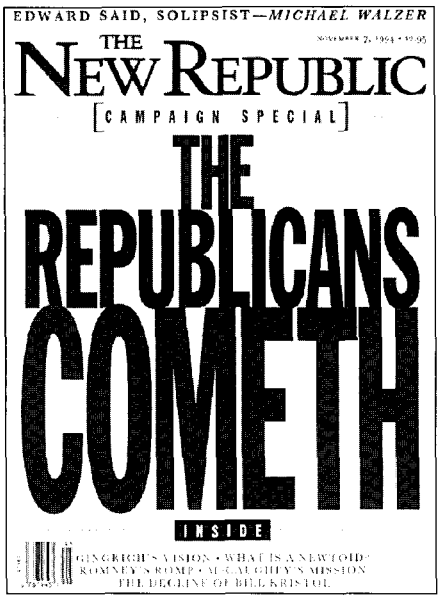
Wilentz's other main objection is that even though everything I say in the book is true, there's no point in saying it, since other books have already appeared on the same subject, and they won the argument against multiculturalism a long time ago. *Dictatorship of Virtue* is a report from the field in the wake of the putative intellectual victory, and it shows that the trends Wilentz deplores, and that he would have you believe are weakening, are gaining in strength.

RICHARD BERNSTEIN
New York, New York

To the editors:

I agree with much of what Sean Wilentz says about the intellectual parentage of multiculturalism. But I can't imagine why he thinks any of it is a criticism of Richard Bernstein's book. True, Richard Rorty has read Foucault and Derrida, but the chances are very good that the New York state commissioner of education, the New York City school chancellor and your local kindergarten teacher have not.

Wilentz supposes that the hyperventilated gallic rhetoric is a major force behind the multicultural mania from seminar room to boardroom. This *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* error arises from intellectuals who imagine that notions that loom large in their studies also loom large in public policy and popular culture. Wilentz has done Bernstein the disservice of treating *Dictatorship of Virtue*



as a poor essay in the history of ideas, which it is not, rather than the excellent essay in intellectual journalism that, as Wilentz seems to recognize, got most of its points spot on.

BARRY R. GROSS
New York, New York

Arms and the man

To the editors:

In the October 31 issue, in the correspondence column, Mark Pietrzyk states, "I'd sure like to know the source for [Paul] Cameron's claim that 'one-third of American men have served in the Armed Forces.' " I have not been following the controversy, and am not taking a stand. I just happened to have this reference at hand:

"Approximately 30 percent of all civilian males 18 years old and older were veterans on September 30, 1991." (Annual Report of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Washington D.C.; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 1991, p. 1.) The report gives the number for "civilian" males, so if you add the number of men currently serving in the military, you will no doubt get to one-third.

JESSE T SHEIDLOWER
New York, New York

Opaque

To the editors:

I deplore your apparent discontinuation of illustrated covers. They were amusing and delightful and I used to look forward to them. Your print-only covers are, by contrast, inevitably opaque, impersonal and uninviting.

PAUL ROTHENSTEIN
Bellflower, California

True north

To the editors:

Ruth Shalit, in her article "Heavens To Betsy" (November 7), writes that the town of Dresden, New York, is an hour north of Rochester. That would place the town in Lake Ontario. Dresden is a small town or village on Seneca Lake, southeast of Rochester. Later in the piece, Yeats County is cited. It is spelled Yates, and Dresden is in Yates County.

PETER EDELMAN
Hastings-on-Hudson, New York

Wipe-out

To the editors:

I enjoyed Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*, and I do agree with Stanley Kauffmann's review ("Shooting Up," November 14) in that parts of it were far-fetched. (Forget nobody hearing gunshots in residential neighborhoods. What about Travolta's crashing his car into Eric Stoltz's house—not to mention that no self-respecting hit men would stand for such awful haircuts?) I do have one complaint about the review. It is perfectly natural for Bruce Willis to wipe his fingerprints off the gun but neglect to clean the doorknob. This scene takes place in his own apartment.

ROBERT PATERNO
Alexandria, Virginia

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FROM WASHINGTON

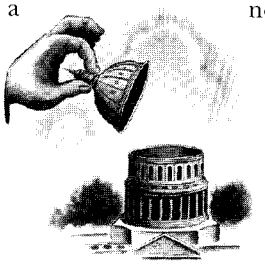
Crazy state

Gingrich argued that conservatives adopt space exploration and Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, the so-called Star Wars program, as causes for tactical political gain. "Young people like space," he said.
—*The Washington Post*, 1985

The Strategic Defense Initiative is back. It's right there in the Republicans' Contract with America—or, at least, in the exegesis. The National Security Restoration Act, one of ten bills the contract would bring to a vote by spring, demands "deployment at the earliest possible date" of an anti-ballistic missile defense. The Republicans haven't said whether that means a space-based defense or a land-based defense. Either way it means trashing the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, upping Pentagon spending by several billion a year for research and upping it by much more when deployment starts. Why aren't you excited?

A surprisingly large number of people are. The new SDI comes with a new post-cold war rationale that has attracted not just Republicans, but some centrist Democrats. Indeed, research for a land-based SDI has stayed alive—if barely, and under another name—during the Clinton administration. Accelerated research and early deployment are thus a real political possibility, even if space-based weapons are a long shot. But before we make that leap, could somebody explain why the post-cold war rationale deserves anything less than the derision that finally overwhelmed the cold war rationale?

The cold war derision had two pillars. First, there were firm doubts about technical feasibility. Nothing has since happened to undermine them. The Pentagon's initial claim of a 96 percent success rate for the Patriot Missile against Iraqi Scuds turned out to be fantasy.



Second, we realized that plain old deterrence worked just fine as a missile defense; so long as Leonid Brezhnev could count on tit for tat, he wouldn't attack. If anything, indeed, a missile defense could weaken the perverse logic behind deterrence by making mutually assured destruction less assured; the "protected" nation might feel too nervy and the unprotected nation too nervous.

Now, all of a sudden, we're told that deterrence won't work. Why? Because now we face not coolly rational, game-theoretical Soviets, but a different class of enemy: "rogue states"—Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Kim Jong Il's North Korea, Muammar Qaddafi's Libya. How does one qualify as a "rogue state"? So far as I can tell, it helps if your leader (*a*) doesn't have white skin, (*b*) dislikes the United States and (*c*) does not behave in genteel fashion (often failing, for example, to wear a necktie during affairs of state). The less polite term for "rogue state," and its real meaning, is "crazy state." But there is zero evidence that any of these leaders is "crazy" in the relevant sense: suicidal. Quite the contrary. Ronald Reagan gave Qaddafi the litmus test for sanity and he passed: we bombed his house, and he modified his behavior. Hussein has shown repeatedly that, once he knows where the brink is, he doesn't step over it.

Bear in mind that a nuclear attack on the United States would be more suicidal for these men than it would have been for the Soviets. Brezhnev might conceivably have weathered a firestorm and emerged from his bunker to inherit a world destroyed. If Saddam Hussein tried that, he would be squashed like a bug upon emerging. And he knows it.

Besides, if any "crazy" leader does want to blow up an American city, there are SDI-proof ways: drive a bomb across the Mexican border, sail it up the Potomac on a yacht or mail it. For a seventy-pound package, second-day UPS costs less than a ballistic missile.

Neo-SDI advocates also invoke fear of "accidental launch." But, as John Pike of the Federation of American Scientists has written in this magazine, "Lots of things have to happen for a missile to fire. The chances of its leaping unbidden from its silo are about the same as the chances of a car starting itself up, opening the garage door and backing out into the driveway without human assistance." Besides, how many missiles are aimed at America these days? Russia has agreed to point no missiles at us in

continued on page 49

The Basic Issue:
A Winning Year!

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

DECEMBER 5, 1994

ABOLISH D.C.

The Republicans have swept into Washington on a promise to shake up the city. But if they really want to strike a blow for political accountability and smaller government, they should abolish Washington altogether.

Don't panic. We don't mean this literally. But there is a case to be made for doing away with the geographical and governmental unit called the District of Columbia. Created by the Constitution itself—"such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may ... become the Seat of the Government of the United States"—the city became a free-standing entity in 1801, when Maryland ceded a swampy tract of land on the Potomac. Congress governed D.C. directly for the next 170 years or so, until granting home rule. Now a mayor and city council enact laws and a budget under congressional supervision.

Home rule has given a chance for Washingtonians to elect homegrown pols to a handful of offices. It has brought greater representation for the black majority on the police force and fire department. Otherwise, home rule has been a disaster. Despite $600 million per year from Congress and some of the highest taxes in America, D.C. is on the brink of insolvency. One-fifth of the city's residents need drug or alcohol treatment. Public housing is a disgrace, headed for federal receivership. One in eight Washingtonians is either in prison, on probation, on parole or under arrest. There are so many offenders, in fact, that during his campaign Mayor-Elect Marion Barry (a proud member of the ex-offender community himself) pandered to criminals' families as if they were just another key voting bloc, offering to create an "office of ex-offenders' affairs."

Meanwhile, white, wealthy residents of the city's Ward 3 have begun to talk about seceding and merging with next-door Maryland—to escape D.C.'s taxes, social problems and the notorious Barry, whose first action upon winning the Democratic primary was to tell whites alarmed by his resurgence to "get over it." Less publicized, but more fateful, is the silent emigration to the suburbs of the city's black middle class, which also has had its fill of social breakdown. Washington's population, which has declined from 800,000 in 1950 to 578,000 today, is increasingly made up of transient, childless yuppies at one extreme and welfare families at the other.

For all his criminality and reckless, cynical expansion of the city bureaucracy, Barry is not solely to blame for the catastrophes of home rule. D.C. would be marginally viable no matter who was mayor. Much of its property is covered by the buildings of non-taxable federal agencies, the only compensation for which is the annually negotiated federal payment. The District is powerless to tax the hundreds of thousands of commuters who work within its boundaries each day then return home to Maryland or Virginia, often just a few yards across the border. It cannot incorporate its neighbors, as some other big cities have done, because its maximum size is fixed. (By the Constitution, remember?)

D.C.'s future is hostage to two old fantasies. One is statehood, which Jesse Jackson, D.C.'s erstwhile "shadow senator," once called "the most important civil rights issue facing America today." With two senators and a representative, the argument goes, the District will finally have the clout to improve its lot. But this pork-barrel scenario is a dead letter: the Republicans will never grant three new votes in Congress to a Democratic city. The Republican right's plan, it seems, is for Congress to exercise ever tighter control over the city. Newt Gingrich is already talking about abolishing the District Committee in the House and depriving D.C. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton of what few voting rights she now enjoys. This, of course, compounds the District's anomalous and unfair situation of taxation-with-only-partial-representation.

There is a solution: return the residential areas of the District to Maryland, the state where growing numbers of Washingtonians would rather live anyway. The areas around the Capitol, White House, monuments and Cabinet agencies could go back to federal control. As citizens of a state, Washingtonians would have taxation with representation. Yes, D.C.'s social problems would burden Maryland. But wealthy Ward 3 would be an offsetting source of revenue. And both jurisdictions could benefit from streamlining redundant services and ending the beggar-thy-neighbor game of luring investment.

Maryland's governor, William Donald Schaefer, proposed "retrocession" back in 1990. The idea was shouted down by *The Washington Post* ("a land grab") and Jesse Jackson ("a Bantustan concept"). Such a reception only shows how few rational arguments there are for continuing to prop up D.C. The route to better government and more political power for Washingtonians is to merge with Maryland. The only losers would be the city's bureaucrats and politicians like Barry who have made a career out of keeping them fat and happy. These are the people from whom District residents really need to be liberated. •

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NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: In post-election fallout, Bishop John Nevins said, "The state has an obligation to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves." The White House personnel office formed a support group for 1,460 soon-to-be-jobless Democratic committee aides. President Clinton said he took "my share of the responsibility." Clinton flew to Asia. Marcella Young of Kansas, dead since September 28, was elected Cherokee Township clerk on November 8. Indiana Republican John Hostettler, who denied that his campaign remark, "they killed Christ," implied Jews, was elected to Congress. Nationally, 88 percent of the black vote went to Democrats and 40 percent of the gay vote went to Republicans. Two escaped Arkansas convicts who made their getaway in a milk truck were caught after police followed a trail of milk cartons. Sweden voted to join the European Union. In Fort Lauderdale, Sandra D'Avarzo drank too much to operate her Mercedes-Benz and asked her 10-year-old daughter to drive her home. They crashed into a front yard three doors from their house. Three Algerians who hijacked a Spanish plane with a coffee grinder turned themselves in. Passenger train service began between London and Paris. A Texas jury rejected Daimion Osby's murder defense based on Urban Survival Syndrome, "the fear that black people have of other black people." Israeli and Jordanian tourism officials announced plans for cross-border windsurfing. A San Francisco court found that three-quarters of the paper money circulating in Los Angeles carried traces of cocaine. Bill Clinton's horoscope said, "Those who expect something for nothing could mark you 'prime target.' "

JIMMY'S WORLD (PART II): Remember former President Jimmy Carter's recent boast to *The New York Times*? On a high after the surrender of Haiti's junta, Carter blurted out that in 1990 he'd tried to get the member states of the U.N. Security Council to vote "no" on any U.S.-backed resolution to force Iraq out of Kuwait, unless it required "good faith" negotiations with Saddam as a pre-condition to war. Carter assured the *Times* he "sent President Bush a copy [of his letter] so I wouldn't go behind the president's back." Former national security adviser Brent Scowcroft then denied that Carter gave Bush such a heads-up—raising the possibility that a former president had tried to carry out a back-channel diplomatic scheme against an incumbent one. Trying to dispel the threat to Carter's reputation, his attorney, Terry Adamson, and his former press secretary, Jody Powell, wrote in a *Washington Post* op-ed last week that Carter mailed Bush a letter identical to the one he'd sent to the Security Council members the day before, and Bush acknowledged receipt. Carter's letters (which Adamson showed us on the condition that we not quote them verbatim) do indeed show that Carter sent Bush roughly the same message as he sent François Mitterrand. But the issue is whether Carter's letter to Bush informed Bush of Carter's mass mailing to the Security Council. The text makes clear that it did not. So the Bush officials were right that Carter didn't directly tell them what he was up to. In fact, Bush first learned about Carter's machinations when a bemused Prime Minister Brian Mulroney of Canada, then a Security Council member, relayed a copy of his letter from Carter to Scowcroft. Adamson admits that, strictly speaking, Carter's claim to the *Times* about notifying Bush is not true. "What he is quoted as saying in that paragraph is not accurate and he knows that," he says. That clears that up. Carter undermined his own president and then lied about it.

CASH-POOR: *The Spectator* of London has always mistaken the expression of prejudice for an intellectual activity, and found it invigorating; but this time the journal has surpassed itself. In its issue of October 29, there appears a piece called "Kings of the Deal," which reveals

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that "Jews govern the New Establishment," that is to say, Hollywood and the new communication technologies. The piece might have been translated from, well, the English of the 1920s and 1930s. It is the kind of rank social anti-Semitism that has always characterized a type of British snob on his or her way down. "The idea of 'New Establishment' players like David Geffen (who refuses to wear a suit), Mike Ovitz or Steven Spielberg dressing up in a tail-coat to go fox-hunting is ludicrous," writes William Cash. The Hollywood hebes, he notes, prefer to wear white socks. It's an observation from which they are unlikely to recover. According to Cash, who covers L.A. for *The Daily Telegraph*, the Jews in Hollywood created an "invidious and protective culture" in which they generally hire each other. Cash even has people in Hollywood trying to pass for Jews. We have been unable to verify this; but we have been able to verify that there are people in Hollywood trying to pass for journalists.

HELP WANTED:

Senator's Employee Lacked Work Permit, Agency Says

—*The New York Times*, November 5

Feinstein Employee Had Permit to Work, INS Says

—*The Los Angeles Times*, November 5

(Thanks to George Kopp, Woodland Hills, California.)

QUAYLE'S REVENGE: The midterm elections have been variously characterized as the end of liberalism, the triumph of the religious right, the rebirth of Ronald Reagan, etc. But in the frenzy to make sense of the recent upheavals, one ominous resurgence has gone unnoticed: the second coming of Dan Quayle. These days, the prince of malaprop is biding his time within the confines of the Hudson Institute in his hometown of Indianapolis. But his former staffers aren't content to wait. The 104th Congress will open with two Quaylies in the ranks. In the Senate, the veep's former deputy chief of staff Spencer Abraham of Michigan won Don Riegle's seat. In the House, David McIntosh won in Indiana. McIntosh had the unenviable task of running Quayle's Council on Competitiveness, where he spent his time desperately, and unsuccessfully, attempting to tutor his blinkering boss in the subtle distinction between a tort and a wetland.

PORK WATCH: Midnight basketball is back! Well, maybe they'll only play during daylight hours, but military personnel, their dependents and military retirees in Huntsville, Alabama, will soon enjoy a $2.3 million physical fitness facility at the Redstone Arsenal. The facility will include a weight room, basketball court, volleyball court and "other things soldiers need to stay in good physical condition." A spokesman for Redstone enthused about the project, saying that the Arsenal had petitioned for funding for the past five years, but it only became part of the Department of Defense budget request this year. Except, the Defense Department *didn't* include the project in this year's military construction budget. Alabama's newly Republican Senator Richard Shelby took it upon himself to bring it to fruition. His concern for physical fitness is admirable; his respect for fiscal fitness is questionable. •

CAMBRIDGE POSTCARD

UNREAL

By Stephen Rodrick

Riding the T on a recent Saturday morning, I overhear two young women having a conversation right out of an afterschool special.

"Do you think my chances will be better if I tell them I had an abortion?"

The second girl chokes on her coffee. "I never knew you had an abortion!"

"I didn't, you idiot. But do you think it will help my chances?"

To embellish or not to embellish is just one of the questions these college students and I have to answer today. We are nervous. An audition for a spot on "The Real World," MTV's self-proclaimed "critically acclaimed *and* very popular real-life soap opera" looms at the end of the line.

In 1992 former "As the World Turns" producer Mary Ellis-Bunim created "The Real World" for MTV. Every year, in a different city, seven purportedly average twentysomethings, strangers to one another, are thrown together in an IKEA-furnished house. Their weekly exploits are filmed cinema verité. Of course, the cast is less like America and more like a Benetton ad with a "Models, Inc." script. In three years there's been a lesbian union, an African American accused of rape, a battered wife and a Latino with AIDS who had a black boyfriend. Then there's the pop culture hero Puck, a bike messenger who picks his nose and eats out of the communal peanut butter jar. Ratings among the Clearasil crowd are soaring. Clearly Newt Gingrich doesn't have cable, or we would have seen a campaign ad about this.

Appearing on "The Real World" entails a decidedly unreal interview process. For next year's season, to be

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set in London, crews are hitting Cambridge, Omaha, Prague and Tel Aviv to compile thousands of video applications. Americans are at a bit of a disadvantage this year, since the London cast will consist of three Euros alongside four Americans. Maturity is also a drawback. If you're over 24, forget about it. "We're looking for freshness," says Cosmo, MTV's flack. "By the time you hit 25 or 26 you get set in your ways."

With that in mind, I part my hair in the middle and join 750 other aspirants. We fill out a three-page application and prepare for a thirty-second video interview. The conversation in the waiting room turns to how, coincidentally, everyone living in "The Real World" is attractive, articulate and exquisitely talented.

"It's nothing unusual," says Dan Olesen, a bus driver from nearby Somerville. "Look at UPS people. None of them are ugly." Sitting by the door are the Toner sisters, Jennifer, 23, Athena, 19, and Nicole, 18. Athena is the biggest fan. "The great thing about the show is that it is so, so real," she explains. When asked about the apparent contradiction in having to audition for a reality-based show, Athena counters, "You don't understand, that doesn't matter. It's real."

While MTV advertises that "this is not an acting showcase," one aspirant, Elaine O'Meara, is undeterred. She sits with résumé and head shot in hand, dreaming of following in the footsteps of Eric Nies, a "Real World" alumnus who now has his own afternoon dance show and calendar. "My life is not like a normal life, you know? I lived in Bermuda when I was a freshman and I got banned from the Marine barracks," she says. "I got caught climbing out of windows twice. Then, once, in an airport, my shirt just popped open for no reason.... As you can tell, I have my own type of style."

Three hours later it is nearly time for the screen test. In a holding room with asbestos hanging from the ceiling, we pass the time passing judgment on other applicants. A raven-haired girl enters wearing baggy clothes and a cap that reads TWAT. I look over her shoulder and read her self-described best trait: "I'm a real go-getter with a wonderful sense of humor." Definitely not sassy enough. A stylishly dressed black man with corn rows, a child on his back and a gaunt white woman in tow passes by. "Oh, he's a sure thing," says a crestfallen nose-ringed girl. "I'd have to be a hermaphrodite to top that." Luckily, the couple strolls on toward the escalator.

As I sense that my own unremarkable life will stand little chance of winning me a spot on the show, it dawns on me that "The Real World" has never featured a true sexual deviant. I begin furiously rewriting my application. I am now a bisexual Princeton graduate whose most meaningful relationship took place in a Düsseldorf airport lounge with a Lufthansa employee. I grew up in a witness protection program and my most embarrassing moment occurred when my mother caught me cavorting naked with my pet spaniel. What do I do for fun? I cruise around in an unmarked van, giving children "rides."

When the comely MTV staffer beckons me into a makeshift studio, however, I chicken out, fearing arrest. She asks my name and my reasons for wanting to live in London. "My name is Alger Hiss. Over forty years ago, I had a promising career in the State Department cut short by an unscrupulous Richard Nixon and some microfilm canisters left in a pumpkin. I was convicted of perjury and spent four years in jail. I figure a trip to London might help me get it out of my system."

The MTV woman looks interested. She asks what I've been doing since my incarceration. "I had an unsuccessful career as a stationery salesman and have been trying to prove my innocence ever since." She asks me to tell a little more about myself. I casually remark that I have multiple genitals. She politely asks me to leave.

STEPHEN RODRICK, a former TNR reporter-researcher, is a senior staff writer at *Boston* magazine.

ON THE HILL

LIFE OF THE PARTY

By Fred Barnes

The change will be undramatic: there won't be a quick vote on a constitutional amendment banning abortion. But when Congress returns to health care reform, pro-lifers will have the votes to insist that coverage for abortion be explicitly barred from any plan. On the subject of breast cancer, there will be hearings again, this time on new studies linking the disease to abortion. And while the law guaranteeing access to abortion clinics isn't likely to be challenged, it may be "cleaned up," according to a Republican official. "We can do that without alienating the public," the official added.

For anti-abortion forces in the new, GOP-controlled Congress, the goals are limited but the votes are there. In the election, they gained roughly forty seats in the House and a half-dozen in the Senate, depending on how you define the pro-life position. The National Right to Life Committee lists Sonny Bono, the new Republican House member from Palm Springs, California, as one of theirs. Bono favors curbs on abortion, but would grant an abortion right in the first trimester. The committee also includes as pro-life three freshman Republicans who support *Roe* v. *Wade* but oppose federal funding of abortion and the Freedom of Choice Act.

Still, the anti-abortion gains were impressive. (Pro-choice leader Kate Michelman calls them "devastating

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and disastrous.") Of the thirty-six House Democratic incumbents who lost, thirty-four were pro-choice. And twenty-nine of them were defeated by pro-lifers. "It is noteworthy that no pro-life incumbents, of either party, were defeated by pro-abortion challengers," says NRL's Douglas Johnson. Perhaps more important, six pro-life women were newly elected to the House, compared to five new pro-choice women. As a result of all this, says Republican strategist Bill Kristol, "the argument you can't win if you're not pro-choice is now hard to sustain." Opposing abortion, says GOP consultant Jeffrey Bell, "wasn't the big albatross the other side said it was. It never is. That's the big myth. Abortion is the issue that just won't quit."

Unlike in 1992, abortion was not a national issue in the campaign. In some key races, it never came up. In Michigan, Republican Senate candidate Spencer Abraham opposed abortion except to save the life of the mother. His advisers feared he'd be attacked at least for not including an exception for cases of rape and incest. But Democrat Bob Carr never raised it. Abraham won 52 percent to 43 percent. In Oklahoma, Democrat Dave McCurdy used a T.V. debate to contrast his pro-choice position against Republican Jim Inhofe's unflinching pro-life stance. Inhofe won 56 percent to 40 percent. In a few House races, anti-abortion activists, such as Dave Weldon in Florida, became Republican candidates. Weldon's foe was Sue Munsey, a Republican-turned-Democrat and pro-choicer who attacked him as an extremist. Weldon won 54 percent to 46 percent.

Right-to-lifers are not claiming a mandate. Helen Alvare, who heads the pro-life office for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, says she initially was "disinclined" to think abortion played a role in the election. "But the gains are too wide and too deep not to attribute some of the gains to it." Still, the new make-up of Congress, a GOP official says, will mean "a tightening of bolts and screws"—making sure all legislation is at least abortion-neutral, but not assaulting abortion rights frontally. For one thing, pro-lifers fear stirring pro-choice forces again, as they did in the 1980s. They'd rather seek small changes and exploit Republican control of the House and Senate to bring the issue before the public through congressional hearings. So expect hearings on fetal tissue research and the proposed use of live embryos for medical research.

What may make a stronger impression on the public, though, is the bloc of seven anti-abortion women in the House, six new and one holdover (Barbara Vucanovich of Nevada). "It's exciting stuff to have these women to argue the pro-life position when Pat Schroeder starts pontificating," says Gary Bauer of the Family Research Council. Now women may replace men like Representative Henry Hyde of Illinois as pro-life advocates in T.V. debates. One of the newcomers, Helen Chenoweth of Idaho, says she doesn't expect "to have abortion issues on our plate very often. But it's not something I ever hedge on or run from." Nor does Edith Greene Waldholtz of Utah. "What shaped my position is I'm an adopted child," she says.

There's one more bit of abortion fallout, the growing sense that pro-lifers are a critical element in the GOP coalition. They are "emotionally whipped up," according to Alvare, by President Clinton's pro-choice stance. Bill McInturff, a pollster from the GOP's moderate wing, says this requires Republicans to nominate a pro-life presidential candidate in 1996. A pro-life independent took 13 percent in the Pennsylvania governor's race this year, weakening McInturff's candidate, Republican Tom Ridge, who eventually won 45 percent to 40 percent. "If the Republican Party nominates a very pro-choice Republican, we'll end up with [third party] right-to-life candidates in every state," McInturff says. They'll chop 4 to 7 percent off the GOP vote. "It's scary," he adds. Scary to McInturff, because it might reelect Clinton. •

Giuliani and What Might Have Been.

EMPIRE BURLESQUE

By Jim Sleeper

When New York City Republican Mayor Rudolph Giuliani crossed party lines to endorse Governor Mario Cuomo on October 24, he romanced panicky liberal Democrats into denial both about Cuomo's senescence and about the disaffection of moderate Democrats. But when State Senator George Pataki beat Cuomo 49 percent to 45 percent on Election Day, finishing off not only Cuomo but also Giuliani's clout with the GOP, the question was obvious: Why hadn't Giuliani simply thrown his arm around Pataki, who had more in common with him politically than do either the grandiloquent Cuomo or the fresh crop of wild-eyed congressional Newtoids? Had Giuliani backed Pataki, he'd have won by even more. The mayor and the city would be sitting pretty instead of ducking Republican wrath. A centrist "reinvention" of the New York welfare state would have much brighter prospects than it has had since the 1970s.

Yet Giuliani hadn't merely endorsed Cuomo; he'd responded to the Republican outrage over his endorsement by running around the state in the governor's behalf. Giuliani depicted Pataki, a mild-mannered Yalie and Columbia Law School graduate, almost as if he were one of the Wall Street or Mafia deal-makers he'd bagged as U.S. Attorney during the 1980s.

One reason for this venom, supporters confided, was that Giuliani wanted to ruin Pataki's campaign patron and his own political nemesis, Senator Alfonse D'Amato. Yet Giuliani's battle with D'Amato raised as many ques-

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tions about his motives as it seemed to answer. As *The Daily News*'s Michael Goodwin noted, Giuliani hadn't always opposed "Senator Shakedown"; as U.S. Attorney, he'd boosted D'Amato's 1986 re-election by joining him at a media-heavy police drug buy in Harlem. In 1992 he'd endorsed D'Amato again, even though they were by then estranged. (Giuliani had prosecuted some of the senator's cronies and D'Amato had put up billionaire Ronald Lauder against him in the 1989 Republican mayoral primary.)

Another good reason—the one Giuliani offered the public—was that Pataki's vow to cut state taxes by 25 percent would decimate services the city was already cutting and force Giuliani to raise local property taxes. Pataki countered that Giuliani and Cuomo had struck a deal for more state aid. Others suggested that Giuliani had simply converted to Cuomoism: "If a conservative is a liberal who's been mugged," shrugged one wag, "a liberal is a conservative who's been elected mayor of New York." Most likely, Giuliani was investing in his own electoral stock as a dragon-slayer above partisan politics.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

At first, the endorsement seemed to pay off. Cuomo surged ahead in the polls. *The New York Times* had a five-page news and editorial orgasm over Giuliani, whom it had dismissed as a "Wonder Bread Son of the '50s" and apostle of "civic Reaganism," but now heralded as a transpartisan hero who "stands very tall" in "the mold of Fiorello LaGuardia." The afterglow lasted for days, lulling liberals into the abyss that swallowed both Cuomo's welfare-state politics and Giuliani's transpartisan promise (which some had said inspired Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan's nod to Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein days after).

Still, discerning New Yorkers had reason to worry about Giuliani's crusade against Pataki. Among upstate and suburban voters—who outnumber city voters—the end had come for Cuomo. In bipartisan concert with a tax-and-spend legislature, he'd made New York exhibit A for conservative Republicans: a job-hemorrhaging welfare state whose public sector employs proportionately more people than any other state's, and whose "business health" ranks forty-eighth in the nation on the seven major indices of a recent *U.S. News & World Report* survey. The state's debt structure is based on junk-bond financing and a soaring deficit that, Cuomo now warns, may be $4 billion.

On Election Day, the New York City turnout was swamped by that of economically stressed upstate and suburban voters. Giuliani had misread the statewide mood in part because the *Times*, complacent about a Cuomo victory, proved more adept at gauging the mood in Port-au-Prince than in Syracuse or Suffolk County.

Cuomo misread the mood, too. As *The Daily News*'s Frank Lombardi noted in October, Cuomo really had run for "governor of New York City," organizing his campaign explicitly and exhaustively to turn out urban black, Hispanic, gay and female supporters—a fatal miscalculation. "There's much less optimism upstate about the future than there is in the city," says Representative Charles Schumer, a Brooklyn Democrat. "You have to see the empty factories in Buffalo, the laid-off workers on welfare for the first time in their lives. They're desperate and struggling."

Cuomo had styled himself the all-provident paterfamilias of what he calls "The Family of New York." But the rallying, leafleting and phone-banking by unions and Democratic county organizations failed to relieve the torpor into which Cuomo's intended beneficiaries had sunk. As Nicholas Von Hoffman wrote in *The Washington Post*—after watching the election in Brooklyn—Democrats have forgotten how to organize those they call "'the entitled and the challenged,' the people who never speak and are ceaselessly spoken about.... As this election showed one more time, the D's have no organizational web to stay in touch with this quasi-constituency of theirs." The Democrats instead rely on surveys and on welfare and human rights lobbyists.

None of which kept *New York Times* reporter Todd

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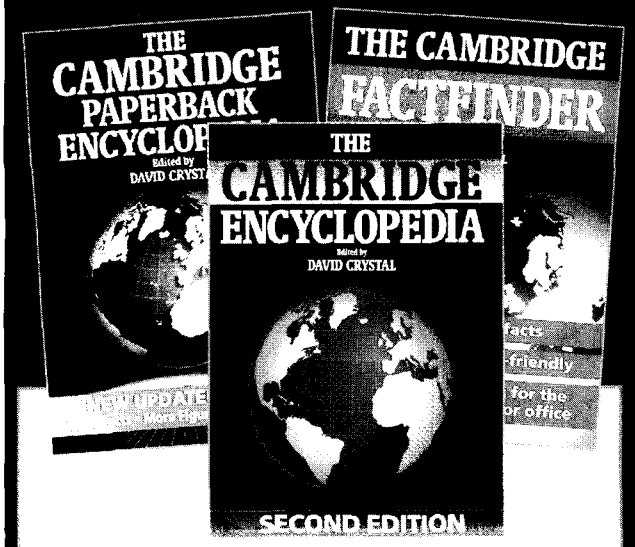

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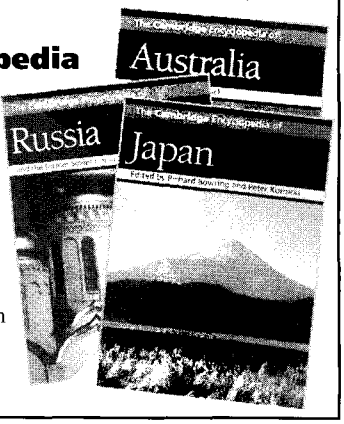

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Purdum from citing a survey to assure readers that Pataki's slogan about Cuomo—"Too liberal for too long"—was only half right, since the poll's respondents bemoaned Cuomo's longevity more than his liberalism. He didn't explain why the less liberal Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, in office far longer than Cuomo, proved impregnable to a challenger no more or less well known than Pataki.

Voters have tired of Cuomo Democrats for two reasons. First, liberal Democrats, no less than their conservative Democratic and Republican colleagues, practice a decrepit "crony capitalism" by arranging publicly funded boondoggles for big campaign contributors. Second, they try to cover their sins by catering to "the human rights and welfare industry lobbyists," as Von Hoffman put it, who think people are liberated by hyping "multicultural" differences that are supposedly rooted in color, surname or sexual orientation.

Few Americans actually believe that, and few multicultural differences contribute anything to a vibrant civic culture or progressive politics. The race-class-gender trinity actually thwarts class politics by distracting people from their common interests. That distraction benefits corporate managers, foundation liberals, lobbyists for the social-welfare industries and the trendies who edit glossy magazines for "market niche" audiences identified by focus groups. But on November 8, moderate as well as conservative voters revolted against this system.

Newspapers such as the *Times* misunderstood the implications of all this during the campaign because they, like Cuomo, had come to embrace and embody the multicultural agenda in their own realms. Nowhere was that more evident in the campaign than on the editorial and op-ed pages, where, in the final week before the election, columnists Frank Rich and Anna Quindlen were preoccupied with a book on the Clarence Thomas hearings that, Rich predicted, would "make people's blood boil." It was more important to them to vindicate Hill's supporters than to write about the blood that was boiling upstate. After it boiled over on Election Day, Quindlen wrote Cuomo an elegy. A *Times* profile of Pataki adapted the old Giuliani "Wonder Bread" metaphor to the governor-elect, dubbing him "Mr. Plain Vanilla."

Had Wonder Bread given Plain Vanilla at least a pro forma endorsement, his beleaguered city would now face the prospect of partisan preferment rather than punishment from Albany and Washington. The city would be able to hope for a $100 million economic boost from the 1996 Republican National Convention and a gravy train from new Senate Banking Committee Chairman D'Amato. Far more important would be the hope that a vigorous, brainy Giuliani-Pataki team could reinvent New York's city and state governments, now locked together in a fiscal free-fall. The only way to stop that free-fall is to reconfigure both of these interdependent colossi at the same time, changing what they do and deliver. That will take cooperation between the mayor and the governor that transcends both partisanship and ideology.

If Democrats still represented a vibrant, class-based politics, they and the country might be fit for the task. Instead, in thrall to Cuomo's and the *Times*'s vague notions, they've defaulted to state Republicans, who may not be up to the task at all. Giuliani and Pataki do have the ability, but the vengeful D'Amato looms large: three days after the election, Pataki had yet to return one of Giuliani's several congratulatory, conciliatory calls. When they do finally meet on the political terrain, ravaged as much by liberal myopia as by right-wing rage, New York's Republican mayor and Republican governor will probably look at each other and ask, "Now what?"

JIM SLEEPER is a political columnist for the New York *Daily News*.

Welfare reform, Clinton and the future.

THEY BLEW IT

By Mickey Kaus

(continued from front cover) Even the president's chief of staff now admits that "in hindsight, it would have been better if we had taken on welfare reform" before tackling health care. In hindsight, of course, many things are clear. In hindsight, Mr. Bonaparte, was invading Russia such a good idea? *Any* initiative might have been preferable to Clinton's disastrous health crusade.

But welfare reform is not just any initiative. When NBC and *The Wall Street Journal* polled voters right after the election, reforming welfare was the issue most often listed as a top priority for the new Congress. Health reform came in a distant second. Among the heavily wooed independent voters, welfare reform beat out such Perotian staples as a balanced budget amend-

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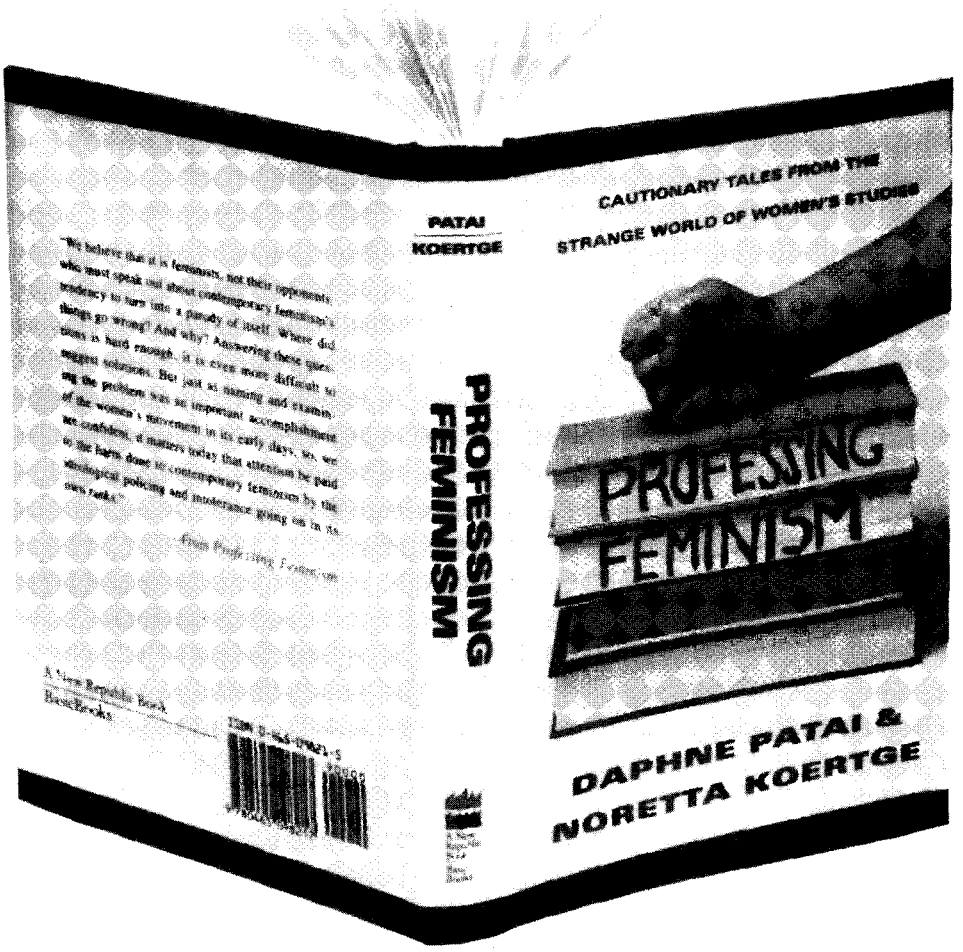

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ment (by a nearly two-to-one margin) and term limits (by a nine-to-one margin). *Journal* reporter Gerald Seib, in follow-up calls to Democrats and independents who voted Republican, was surprised to find that they spontaneously raised the welfare issue.

Nor did it really take hindsight to recognize welfare's salience. How, after all, had Bill Clinton gotten elected in 1992? By promising to "end welfare as we know it." That was the main message of the television ads his consultants ran in contested states. It was a central applause line in both of his State of the Union addresses. Indeed, as Al From of the Democratic Leadership Council points out, when it appeared that Clinton had stolen the welfare and crime issues from the Republicans in early 1994, there was talk in the press that Clinton was on the verge of redefining American politics in his favor. "It's not that they didn't see the tsunami coming on this particular issue," says another Democratic strategist close to the White House. They just chose not to ride it.

How can welfare be so important? After all, the program that most people mean when they talk about "welfare"—Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)—only spends about $25 billion per year in federal and state money. Add in Food Stamps, and you're still talking about 3 percent of the federal budget. But it's a crucial 3 percent, both symbolically and substantively.

Poll-takers will tell you that welfare reform is a "values" issue. The values involved are work and family.

Health Snare

Whenever health reform looked like it was running out of steam over the past year, Clinton played the welfare card. Many people stay on welfare, the president said, "because they do not want to put their children at risk of losing health care." The point was that we can't reform welfare until everyone has health coverage; health care reform had to come first. In fact, though, there is little evidence to back up this position. So, not only are there strong political reasons for proceeding immediately with welfare reform, but the argument for waiting is groundless.

There are two parts to the administration's argument. The first is that passing universal health coverage would lead to large welfare reductions. It cites three studies to support this conclusion. These findings are of dubious value, however, since they are based on data from the period *before* Congress expanded Medicaid for those leaving welfare. What's more, Clinton draws a different conclusion each time he brings them up. "A million people are on welfare today because it's the only way they can get health care coverage," said the text of this year's State of the Union address. That would mean that 7 percent of the 14 million people on welfare stay on the rolls due to the lack of health insurance. But what the president actually said to the nation on the night of January 25 was this: "One million people are on welfare today because it's the only way they can get health care coverage *for their children*" (emphasis added). So it's a million *families* that are affected, or 20 percent of the 5 million welfare families. A week later, in a speech to the National Governors' Association, the president put it still another way: "Just under one in five people who get back on welfare after they get off do so for health-related reasons." Where this came from is anybody's guess—there's no research on the subject.

Second, the administration says only 8 percent of the jobs obtained by welfare recipients include health insurance—implying that it's unfair to pressure recipients to get jobs and leave welfare before health security is guaranteed. Although the statistic is accurate, the implication is misleading. Under 1988 legislation, a welfare mother (95 percent of heads of welfare families are women) who gets a job and leaves the rolls is covered by Medicaid for twelve months. At worst, after a year, she stops working and goes back on welfare. Chances are, though, that she will still be covered after a year. The Congressional Budget Office recently looked at workers hired for jobs paying $5 an hour or less (the jobs open to most welfare recipients). At the outset, only 8.8 percent of them got health insurance from their employers; but of those still working a year later, 31.5 percent do. No big surprise here; often, new employees are placed on probation and don't receive all the fringe benefits right away. Furthermore, an additional 37.7 percent have other insurance—through a spouse, or from continued Medicaid coverage. In all, about 70 percent of those who have been working for more than a year are covered.

Even those welfare recipients who aren't covered after their year of federal Medicaid expires can get health care from a public clinic, or can return to welfare. The recidivism rate is unknown, although a recent Urban Institute study of Washington state's program found no evidence that this happens. All of this suggests that even in the absence of universal coverage, welfare mothers should be encouraged to find work.

The irony here is that all we really have to do to help poor mothers get off welfare is enforce the current law. Incredibly, only 30 percent of welfare mothers who find jobs and leave welfare actually get the year of Medicaid to which they are entitled. Since only 8 percent have employer-provided health insurance when they start work, this means that almost two-thirds of those leaving welfare have no coverage at all. There are many reasons—states don't bother to tell recipients that they're eligible, and recipients forget to sign up. So the president is right after all: for most welfare mothers, leaving welfare *does* mean losing Medicaid. But the problem isn't the law, it's the failure to implement a statute that's already on the books.

We really don't know how much difference universal coverage would make in getting people off welfare, but it's probably not great. In any event, it's now more clear than ever that health reform—especially universal coverage—isn't going to pass anytime soon, so there is little to be gained by letting it hold up welfare reform. Meanwhile, this president is in political trouble, and more and more people wonder whether he is really the "New Democrat" he said he was two years ago. So no more stalling: bring on welfare reform.

PAUL OFFNER

Paul Offner is legislative aide to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. The views expressed here are his own.

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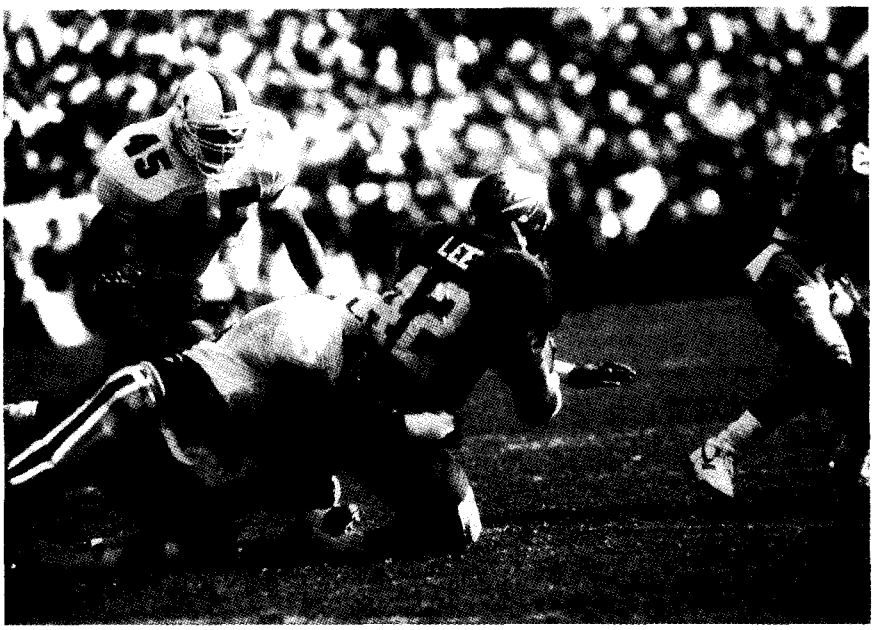
Turning Dreams into Realities



The "Hitachi Promise of Tomorrow" scholarship program encourages student athletes to take the lessons learned on the football field today and teach children in the classrooms tomorrow.

Encouraging Student Athletes to Become Teachers

During his three years as nose guard on Louisiana State University's football team, John Mawae came to know the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. But nothing moved him more than working with disabled children in a Special Olympics held at LSU. "Seeing those kids realize their dreams against all odds really got to me," Mawae recalls. "I knew then what I wanted to do: help kids like them realize their dreams."

Mawae will get that chance, thanks in part to the "Hitachi Promise of Tomorrow" scholarship program created by the College Football Association (CFA) and sponsored by Hitachi, Ltd. Started last academic year, the program awards $335,000 in scholarships at the 67 CFA member universities. At each university, a $5,000 scholarship is awarded to an outstanding senior or graduate student who intends to become a teacher and has participated in the school's football program as a player, trainer, or manager. Mawae, a 1992 scholarship recipient, intends to use his grant to pursue a career teaching kids with special needs.

"Teaching plays an important but undervalued role in society," says Charles M. Neinas, the CFA's executive director. "We'd like to encourage more student athletes to pursue this field, because we think that what they learn on the football field helps to make them effective teachers in the classroom."

Nicole Hagner, a recent University of Pittsburgh graduate, agrees. "Athletics teaches you that it's possible to turn the right dream into a reality through hard work, discipline and teamwork. I'd like to bring that lesson to the classroom," she says. Hagner, who served as a student trainer on Pitt's football team, plans to use her grant to become certified as a high school biology teacher.

Nicole Hagner, University of Pittsburgh graduate and 1992 scholarship recipient.

As college football fans and parents of school-age children, we are proud to be a part of the "Hitachi Promise of Tomorrow" scholarship program. We hope that it helps more student athletes like John and Nicole to realize their dreams of becoming teachers.

HITACHI

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Both AFDC and Food Stamps flout the work ethic, offering support to able-bodied Americans whether they work or not—the only major components of our "welfare state" that do this. Social Security's retirement benefits, in contrast, only go to workers. Social Security is immensely popular, while AFDC is despised. AFDC also seemingly undermines families, because it is available, by and large, only to single parents (mainly mothers).

But more than symbolism is involved, since welfare is implicated in America's most difficult social problem—the existence of whole neighborhoods, mostly African American, where there are precious few intact, working families. Welfare may or may not have caused this underclass, but welfare is clearly what sustains it. And the underclass, in turn, drives the crime problem, the race problem, the "urban crisis" and the general sense of social decay ("12-year-olds having babies, 15-year-olds killing each other").

The underclass is not the main cause of the other big domestic problem Clinton tried to address—the growing economic gap between skilled and unskilled workers. But welfare reform still speaks to that issue. Clinton's political advisers seem to believe that the only way to win over the struggling middle class is to deliver tangible benefits—tax cuts, job training, health insurance. That's one reason the White House focused on health care. But another way to appeal to struggling, underpaid workers is to honor their work—by dishonoring the non-work of those who stay on the dole. No wonder Newt Gingrich traveled around the country talking about dismantling the "liberal welfare state." He wasn't referring to Social Security.

The irony is that Clinton had a tough, even radical welfare plan to run on, if he'd chosen to. Clinton pledged during the campaign to offer welfare recipients two years of education and training, after which they would "have to go to work," in a community service job if necessary. As introduced, finally, last June, Clinton's plan fudged the two-year limit a bit through various exemptions and deferrals. But in other respects it was surprisingly strict. The penalty for repeatedly failing to work, once the time limit was reached, was loss of all AFDC benefits.

Like every welfare reformer—Gingrich included—Clinton discovered that making recipients work actually costs more money than mailing out checks. Workers need supervisors and materials. Poor single mothers need subsidized day care. To save money, Clinton applied his time limit only to the youngest third of the welfare caseload. That made sense (it would still discourage young girls who hadn't become single mothers from going on the dole) but it let the press unfairly portray Clinton's plan as "modest." Still, a *Los Angeles Times* poll found that Clinton's two-years-and-go-to-work idea had 90 percent support. Even when voters were told the plan would cost them $50 billion over ten years, it drew 70 percent approval.

Imagine how the midterm election might have looked if Clinton had spent 1994 pushing this tough, popular proposal—standing up to the Congressional Black Caucus, fighting off paleoliberals and neoconservatives, overcoming gridlock, in general showing he is the sort of forceful leader voters have now concluded he's not. Imagine ... oh, it's too depressing.

Instead, Clinton has not only lost control of Congress; he has lost control of welfare reform. Yes, he will reintroduce his two-years-and-work bill, but it will be dead in Gingrich's House. Yes, as Clinton noted in a post-defeat news conference, the leading Republican welfare bill in 1994 was "quite similar" to his proposal. But the House Republicans have long since abandoned that bill as too liberal. Instead, the House is likely to take up the so-called Personal Responsibility Act, the far nastier scheme contained in the Contract with America.

How nasty? Plenty. For starters it cuts off all AFDC and housing benefits of illegitimate children whose mothers are under 18. States may, at their option, extend the ban to mothers aged 18, 19 and 20. The targeted children are banned from AFDC for life—if their mother works for ten years in a factory, gets laid off and applies for welfare at age 30, she will still be turned away.

She'll be turned away even if she's willing to toil in a community service job. Other welfare recipients are required to work in such jobs—half the caseload must be in a work program by 2003, and nobody can receive aid for more than two years without working for it. But after five years, even if a mother has been doing "workfare" full time, she is cut off completely—no AFDC, no workfare, for the rest of her life. That's in the generous states. Less permissive jurisdictions can choose to cut off recipients after only two years (if one year was spent in a work program).

The Personal Responsibility Act really does start to dismantle the welfare state. Another provision strips AFDC, housing and the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program—which aids the elderly and disabled poor—of "entitlement" status. Instead, these programs are placed under a "cap" that requires them to be cut dramatically. When the "cap" is reached, disabled applicants for SSI could face waiting lists. Republicans can claim that they will protect SSI in this crunch. But then they will have to drastically cut something else. They needn't say what, of course—that's the beauty of "caps."

Did I mention that the plan (including the $10 billion cost of the work program) is financed in large part by ending virtually all benefits for *legal* immigrants. Oh, one more thing: the Food Stamps program is more or less abolished, folded in with other nutrition programs under its own lowered "cap."

Taken as a whole, this is a pretty breathtaking package. Clinton must be appalled by it (and by talk among GOP House members that it doesn't go far *enough*). "At least in the president's version, a job has to be available," Representative Robert Matsui, a liberal Demo-

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crat on the Ways and Means Committee, told *The Los Angeles Times*. Of course, Matsui worked strenuously to block the president's plan this year, when it had a chance.

What can Clinton do now? The new dynamic of welfare reform is fairly clear: Clinton has veto power, but it is hollow, since everyone knows he won't want to reject a welfare reform bill before the 1996 election. In this situation, it probably doesn't do him much good to draw sharp "lines in the sand," something he's not very good at anyway. If he pledges to veto provision X, that only makes it more likely Republicans will stick it to him by passing X.

The Senate might save him. Republicans only have 53 votes, and seven belong to moderate Republicans who wrote a letter to Clinton last spring urging a soft line on welfare. Clinton can probably rely on Majority Leader Bob Dole to protect the Food Stamps program, which is popular in farm states. Beyond this, three potential tactics suggest themselves.

First, Clinton can emphasize work, and the principle that people who are willing to work to support their children shouldn't be left out in the cold. The business cycle hasn't been repealed. If there are no jobs to be had in the private economy, do we really want a low-skilled divorcee who has been picking up trash in a subminimum-wage community service job to be left on her own? Why not let her keep her workfare job? The Republicans' dirty little secret is that for all their Reaganesque talk of work, they have been gradually abandoning workfare. After all, it costs money. It requires government. Better to cut 'em off. But that's not a position Gingrich or Phil Gramm can defend easily.

Which brings up a second, more obvious Clinton strategy: helping the press portray the Republicans as mean. Gingrich, Dole and Gramm certainly look the part. And House Republicans are extremely vulnerable on the Contract's explicit threat to SSI. The SSI program is very different from AFDC; it gives cash only to people who cannot work. Do we really want a 65-year-old single man who works for forty years and then goes blind to live in poverty? There will be countless horror stories. Take it away, Peter Jennings.

Finally, Clinton must compromise, but he can do it in a way that preserves the chance to test out his own reforms. We don't really know, after all, how many welfare recipients are simply incapable of working. We don't know the extent to which cutting off unwed mothers will encourage marriage, and the extent to which it will simply produce homelessness. We don't know if humane orphanages or group homes for single mothers are possible. The answers won't come from the study of the mincing, incremental reforms that have been tried. They will come from letting some states try the Republicans' radical ideas and some states try Clinton's radical ideas. That's the obvious way out for the president. It also happens to be the right way to proceed. The results should come in sometime during Clinton's second term. •

Liberalism's second chance.

WHAT BILL WROUGHT

By Michael Lind

The crushing defeat of the Democrats creates the best opportunity in a quarter-century for liberalism. By liberalism, of course, I mean the liberalism of the New Deal and the original, color-blind civil rights revolution, the liberalism of FDR and Truman and LBJ, of Martin Luther King Jr. and Bayard Rustin. This liberalism buckled at Chicago in 1968 under the weight of a coalition of left-liberal, upper-income radicals and black-power militants. These progressive-liberals alienated a growing number of once-Democratic white middle-class Americans, who floated for a generation between the two parties. On the presidential level, they soon came to live in sin with the Republicans. On November 8, they married them.

The shock to the Democratic Party should be seismic. Democrats may one day regain Congress, but they will be different Democrats. Even those Democrats who lost on November 8 resembled tough-on-crime, socially conservative, anti-Washington Republicans more than their party elites. Progressive-liberals, with their odd mix of patronizing liberal tokenism in civil rights, utopian multilateralism in foreign policy and bribery by means of proliferating entitlements, have gone the way of the Whigs and the Mugwumps and the Free Silverites.

They deserve their fate. And they deserve little consolation. Some have blamed the Democratic collapse on the end of the cold war. Having lost an enemy, it is argued, angry voters are now seeking substitutes: the poor, blacks, immigrants. This is only half right. Not the half about American domestic politics having been primarily about foreign policy during the cold war (it wasn't), but the half about the importance of the cold war's end. One by one, since the Soviet Union imploded, the dominant parties in the democracies have been blown to smithereens by populist and nationalist electorates: the Social Democrats in Sweden, the Christian Democrats in Italy, the Socialists in France, the Liberal Democratic Party in Japan, the Progressive Conservatives in Canada. And now the Democrats. Their turn might have come earlier had our divided government not caused a Republican president to act as a lightning rod in 1992.

But the factor uniting these demolitions was not the effect of the cold war's end on the right—the search for enemies—but the effect of the cold war's end on the left—its marginalization. For half a century in the democracies, "the left" was socialism and "the right" was

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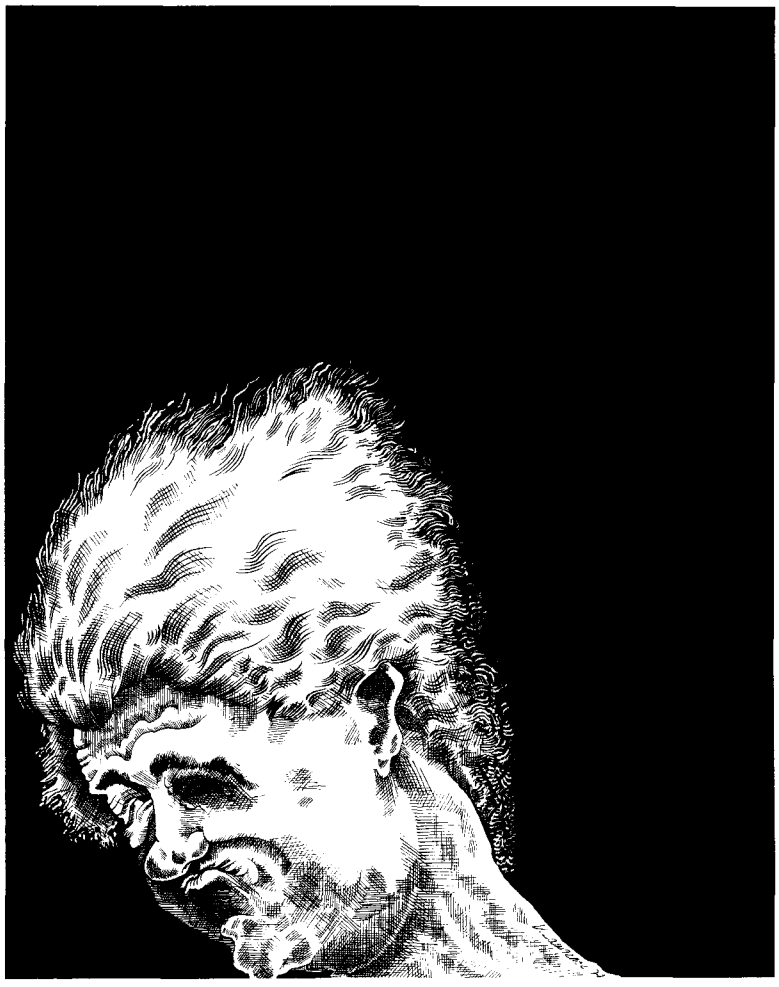
free-market, business-class conservatism (illiberal populist and fascist conservatism having been discredited by World War II). In this scheme, "the center" was composed of social democrats (in Europe) and progressive-liberals (in the United States).

But the Soviet collapse and the Chinese abandonment of communism discredited socialism, no matter what democratic socialists may say. This caused a global shift in the definitions of the politically relevant left, right and center. All of a sudden, the social democrats and progressive-liberals, to their horror, discovered they were no longer the moderate "center," but the left-wing extreme. Yesterday's liberal conservatives, formerly the right, are now the mainstream. The vacuum to starboard has been filled by the revival of pre-1945 national traditions: neo-fascism in Italy, fundamentalism, nativism and eugenics in the United States.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Some centrist parties, like Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats, have maintained their pivotal role by taking a few giant steps to the right, putting out more flags and taking in fewer immigrants. Clinton did his best to chase the rightward-drifting center. Remember, this was the most conservative Democratic president since Grover Cleveland. This was the Democrat who denounced Sister Souljah and called for boot camps for youth offenders and put his humiliation of labor in the NAFTA debate at the top of his résumé.

Indeed, Clinton's stillborn neoliberalism looked much like the emerging Republican consensus. This consensus, devised by trial and error in campaigns like that of New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman, eclectically combined pro-choice (and in some cases pro-gay rights) attitudes with pro-family rhetoric; tax cuts and a crackdown on welfare; reinventing government and free trade. Riordan, Giuliani, Weld—all won big on this agenda. Even the religious right softened its anti-abortion rhetoric and concentrated on gay-bashing.

Clinton's apologists argue that Clinton made this "centrist" move and still got clobbered. They point to deficit reduction, NAFTA and so on to buttress their case. But they ignore one critical issue: race. Since the 1960s the Democratic Party has been the party of racial preferences for nonwhites. Not only have Democrats extended racial preference to new areas in every decade—busing in the '70s, college quotas and race-norming on tests in the '80s, racial gerrymandering of congressional districts in the '90s—but they have extended the racial spoils system to ever more groups. The most important of these is the so-called Hispanic population, a diverse group whose members never suffered from the kind of legal (as opposed to social) apartheid inflicted on blacks, Native Americans and West Coast Asian Americans. Despite his campaign posturing, Clinton did nothing decisive in office to reverse this impression. Quite the contrary.

Democratic strategists hoped they could lure alienated white voters home without offending the black voters who are now their core constituency. They thought they could buy white acquiescence in ever-escalating racial preferences by means of a bribe: generous, universal entitlements for the white majority, like health care. But they failed to deliver health care. What they did deliver was Deval Patrick, arguing on behalf of the Clinton Justice Department that the law permits firing white teachers simply because they are white. This hubris has ironically produced its nemesis in the elevation of Strom Thurmond, the 1948 presidential candidate of the white supremacist Dixiecrat Party, to the chairmanship of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Then there is the other wedge issue: immigration. Immigration is a factor in the equation because nonwhite immigrants (i.e., the majority) are eligible, under the laws the Democrats made, for affirmative action benefits denied to whites, either native-born or naturalized. Alarm about Third World immigration, of course, is prompting all First World democracies to move toward strict restrictionist regimes. Only in the United States, thanks to progressive-liberals, are immigrants eligible to participate in a racial spoils system.

On November 8, immigration was not a dominant

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

"First Things First"

We often hear we are in the midst of "school wars" that foreshadow the end of public education. Parents, like U.S. society in general, we're told, are increasingly divided along racial and religious lines. As a result, there are constant battles over issues like sex education, teaching values and multiculturalism, with the schools caught in the middle. But a recent study by the Public Agenda Foundation, a non-partisan research group, suggests just the opposite. While there are people with extreme views, most Americans are far more concerned about holding students to basic standards of conduct and achievement. Moreover, there is considerable agreement about even some of the most controversial questions.

Most people are not especially worked up about the issues that figure in the so-called school wars.

The study, "First Things First: What Americans Expect from the Public Schools," surveys the general adult population and public school parents who are white, African-American and traditional Christians (defined as people who agree that "The Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally" and/or who describe themselves as "born-again Christians").

As I pointed out a couple of weeks ago, most people said they are extremely concerned with having safe schools where discipline is enforced and students master the basics before moving on to other things. But most—and that includes African-American and traditional Christian parents—are not especially worked up about the issues that figure in the so-called school wars:

> Despite the attention they have attracted in the press and the genuine turmoil they have created in some school districts, "values" disputes about how history and science should be taught, about how minorities are portrayed, about what textbooks should be used and about what moral traditions should be conveyed in sex education and AIDS prevention programs are not at the top of the public's list of concerns about the schools.

For example, 24 percent of all Americans (and 30 percent of traditional Christian parents) believe that schools "are too graphic and explicit when teaching sex education" and think that this is a serious problem. These are not insignificant percentages, but they pale in comparison with the percentages that consider drugs and violence a serious school problem (72 percent of all Americans; 66 percent of traditional Christian parents; and 80 percent of African-American parents). And though we hear a lot about disputes over "inappropriate" material in textbooks and lessons, relatively few parents identify this as a serious concern: Fifteen percent of parents (and 23 percent of traditional Christian parents) say they have seen something that "struck them as very inappropriate" in their child's textbooks or lessons. Nor is the public worried that children will be corrupted by the people who teach them. Seventy-six percent say teachers' values are "close to their own."

There is broad agreement among all groups that schools should teach values, and they are in substantial agreement about what values should be taught: tolerance and equality. For example,

- 95 percent of Americans say that schools should teach "respect for others regardless of their racial or ethnic background."
- 84 percent believe students should learn that "having friends from different racial backgrounds and living in a racially integrated neighborhood is good."
- 76 percent say students should be taught about "the struggle for black civil rights in the 1950s and 1960s."
- Even in an area as controversial as homosexuality, 61 percent of traditional Christian parents believe it is appropriate for the schools to teach "respect for people who are homosexual"—the same percentage as the general public.

Moreover, people tend to reject views that are extreme and divisive: Most would oppose a school's inviting a speaker who "argues that the Holocaust never happened" or one who advocates black separatism.

In other words, most Americans are not interested in making the schools vehicles for private beliefs. Rather, they believe that the job of the schools is to teach kids "the values that allow a diverse society to live together peacefully."

Of course, there are areas of disagreement. For example, traditional Christian parents are more likely than other groups to object to sex education that is value-neutral. But even in this controversial area, researchers found that participants in focus groups did not try to impose their views on others. In fact, they looked for "areas of agreement" and for ways of reaching a decision acceptable to everyone.

The Public Agenda research reveals broad agreement among Americans about school issues often considered flash points. And it should reassure those who fear the "takeover" of schools and school boards by extreme right-wing groups. As "First Things First" shows, extreme elements will have a chance to gain leadership only when a school district deviates from the middle-of-the-road values held by the majority of white, African-American and traditional Christian parents.

For a copy of the report, send $10 to Public Agenda, 6 E. 39th St. NYC, NY 10016.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1994 by Albert Shanker.

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concern except in California. But the California experience provides the best illustration of why progressive-liberalism died. In his campaign against Proposition 187, President Clinton argued, on the basis of a single court case, that the children of illegal immigrants, instead of being deported along with their law-breaking parents, should be educated at taxpayer expense. There is not a democracy in the world in which a party advocating free public services for foreigners would not be obliterated at the polls. Progressive-liberalism came to power in the Democratic Party during the riotous '68 Convention, as the inheritors of the party on the Chicago streets burned the Stars and Stripes. The end may have come in Los Angeles, when a crowd that had been assembled to denounce Proposition 187 waved flags bearing the eagle and serpent of Mexico.

The demise of the progressive-liberals does not give the Republicans a mandate (except, perhaps, to reduce immigration). At the moment, the Republicans have merely captured the center of American politics—the anxious and angry haves, who include much of the middle class as well as the rich. The haves possess no program, except possession. Reagan discovered that no middle-class entitlements can be cut; Clinton discovered that no new entitlements that would appear to benefit groups other than middle-class Americans (such as universal health care) can be created. Just as the haves are fortifying their neighborhoods, turning the cheerful suburbs of the '60s into the armed enclaves of the '90s, so they are barricading themselves in with their FDR-to-Johnson subsidies. They will execute every prisoner and throw every unwed mother into prostitution before they accept cuts in Social Security, housing subsidies or student loans. They are the New Dealers from hell.

Unlike the fragile Republican majority, this pattern is part of the deep structure of American politics for the foreseeable future. It leaves difficult options for the Democrats. The party might come back by retooling itself as a second Republican party: me-too, dime-store liberal conservatives. Or it can return to real liberalism, in the form of new liberal nationalism.

Liberal nationalism, as distinct from progressive-liberalism, would begin with the proposition that America is a transracial nation-state, not a congeries of separate racial "cultures" held to varying standards and eligible for varying benefits. Reviving the color-blind idealism of the '60s, liberal nationalists would lead the fight to dismantle not only racial preferences but the archaic system of pseudo-scientific racial labeling—for the best liberal reasons.

In its fascination with social engineering, progressive-liberalism neglected the more fundamental tasks of economic policy and the core of national security and personal safety. Liberal nationalists would reverse the priorities: national military strength, controlled borders and safe and well-policed streets would come first, followed by pragmatic state intervention in the economy to protect and raise wages and living standards for the wage-earning majority. The liberal nationalist kind of social engineering, instead of focusing on allocating Cabinet seats on the basis of race and gender, would take the form of a war on oligarchy. The goal would be to identify and eliminate hidden and not-so-hidden class privileges.

This strategy would co-opt many of the goals of the new Republicans—but would call their bluff on the question of paying for them. Want to balance the budget? Sure—we'd rather finance a state-of-the-art military through income taxes on the rich anyway. Want to cut back on immigration? A steep tax on nannies could help defray the costs. Let the rich raise their own children, like the rest of us. Crack down on crime? Fine—but let's tax private security services to give the rich an incentive to pay their fair share of taxes for the metropolitan police. Replace welfare with workfare? O.K. We're willing to create a couple of million public-sector jobs. Are you? Reform Congress? Let's start by outlawing political action committee contributions to Republican committee chairs. And while we're at it, let's outlaw lobbying on behalf of foreign governments and corporations by ex-officials. Are you still with us, guys?

Liberal nationalism, like its New Deal predecessor, would be tax-and-spend liberalism—tax the affluent and spend on the wage earners. The market cannot be counted on to arrest the decline in average incomes that the market is causing in the first place. It is probably no accident that income inequality in the United States steadily declined between 1929 and 1969—the era of the redistributionist, pro-labor New Deal liberal coalition—and has steadily increased again in the era of Republican and conservative Democratic presidents. Nor, probably, is it a coincidence that American capitalism boomed when public investment—the Pentagon, the highway system—was at its highest levels. When it worked for most Americans, the market had a lot of help.

Needless to say, a new liberal economic strategy requires Democratic politicians who don't depend for their advice, their personnel or their campaign funds on Goldman, Sachs. The next generation of liberals will need to learn once again how to wage class war. Some say class war can't work in the United States. Nonsense. Only the populist Democrats—FDR, Truman, Johnson—have succeeded and reshaped America; the conservatives—Cleveland, Kennedy, Carter, Clinton—have been ineffectual. The suspicion of many white Americans that the state is their enemy can be reduced by the replacement of race-based programs with entitlements that are universal or means-tested (why should the rich get tax breaks on their mansion mortgages?). We can count on the Republicans to make it easier for their corporate sponsors to keep slashing wages and benefits, busting unions, replacing full-time workers with temps, demanding overtime. The Republicans, in short, will make it safe for the new liberals to wage class war. Just give them a few years in power.

Let the Republicans celebrate. We liberals of the next generation might even join them. After all, in killing progressive-liberalism, Gingrich, Gramm and company have now made room for real liberalism. Goodbye Mr. McGovern and Mr. Carmichael—and welcome back, Mr. Truman.

MICHAEL LIND is a senior editor of *Harper's*.

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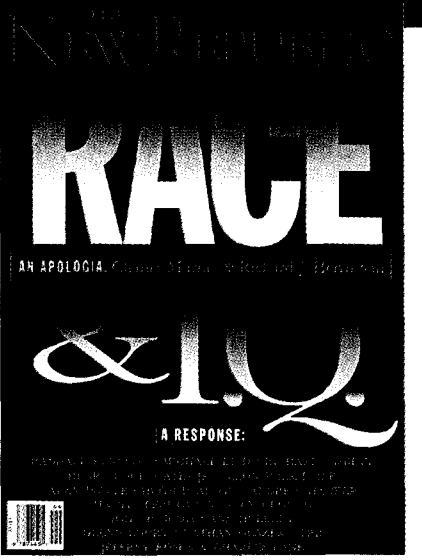

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The U.N. Bosnia commander should quit.

YELLOW ROSE

By Joshua Muravchik

Lieutenant General Sir Michael Rose assumed command of U.N. forces in Bosnia within days of the attack on an open-air market in downtown Sarajevo that killed sixty-eight civilians. That attack finally galvanized NATO into a specific threat against the Serbian forces who had been bombarding the city for nearly two years: all heavy weapons had to be removed from within a twenty-kilometer radius or placed under U.N. control within ten days, or they would be attacked from the air.

Within days, however, General Rose made clear that the ten-day deadline was not to be taken literally. "There will be no air strikes in this country unless I give the order," he said. He lashed out at forces loyal to Bosnia's Muslim-led government, accusing them of provoking the Serbs. He announced that to be deemed under U.N. control, Serb weapons would merely have to be under surveillance, from near or far, by U.N. forces.

When the shelling of the city ended, Rose emerged a hero. But in this first, triumphant episode, the lineaments of Rose's ten-month tenure were already clear: impatience with the Bosnian government, a keen desire to show the Americans who is boss and, above all, the impulse to purchase peace—or its simulacrum—by placating the Serbs.

When the Serbs stopped bombarding Sarajevo, they turned their heavy weapons on the east Bosnian town of Gorazde, with its 65,000 mostly Muslim inhabitants. After much delay and carnage, NATO and the U.N. laid down an ultimatum for the Serbs to withdraw forces from Gorazde and heavy weapons from its environs. But traveling to Gorazde, General Rose immediately announced that reports of 700 dead and 2,000 wounded from weeks of Serbian bombardment were grossly exaggerated. These figures had come from the office of the U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees, which, despite Rose's remarks, stood by them, and stands by them strongly to this day. Even spokesmen for the U.N. office in Bosnia won't endorse Rose's version.

While in Gorazde, Rose met with a contingent of British soldiers, telling them that Bosnian government forces had fled "because they want us to fight their war for them." This was two years after the Bosnian government had begun pleading for weapons with which to defend itself and a year after it asked for the withdrawal of U.N. forces from Bosnia, if this were the price for receiving arms. Rose himself was a leading opponent of granting their plea. When the Serbs finally bowed to the NATO ultimatum, the Bosnian government protested that they had left a military unit in one corner of the town. For days Rose dismissed and ridiculed these complaints, until repeated sightings of the Serb fighters by journalists made this posture untenable.

Sometimes Rose's indulgence for the Serbs even conflicted with the interests of his own U.N. troops. In May, a Danish commander of a U.N. contingent around the "safe area" of Tuzla complained publicly that his men had been endangered when higher U.N. officials vetoed his request for air strikes against a Serb tank that was firing on them. A U.S. ground attack plane had locked onto the tank but was refused permission to fire. A spokesman for the U.N. civilian leadership said General Rose and his deputy had made the decision.

During the summer the Serbs resumed strangling Sarajevo, sniping at civilians and sneaking heavy weapons and tanks into the twenty-kilometer "total-exclusion zone." When pressed about this infringement, Rose grew testy, vowing he would not "launch World War III just to blow up a rusty old tank." As Serb violations grew bolder with each day, Rose proclaimed with unintended irony, "There is a limit to how much infringement on that total-exclusion zone we can accept." But even this tepid warning was canceled the next day by one of Rose's spokesmen, who declared: "Each violation of the total-exclusion zone will be assessed by itself."

When NATO finally reacted to Serb violations, it bombed an anti-tank gun chosen by Rose, who insisted on giving the Serbs advance warning so that they might evacuate. Afterward, the Serbs scoffed that the weapon had been inoperable, but Rose denied this. He announced, however, despite his earlier sarcasm about rusty old tanks, that the targeted gun had been delivered by Western allies to Tito's "partisans" during World War II.

By September, disquiet with Rose's performance within official circles had sparked rumors that he might leave before his year's tour was completed. But he sought to quash these, striking a heroic stance: "I am here for one year and I promised the people of Sarajevo I would be with them as a Sarajevan living in their city, walking around the street as they do, without a flak vest ... and returning this city to peace." The Sarajevans were notably ungrateful. The daily newspaper *Oslobodenje* called for Rose's removal, a call quickly seconded by all eight Bosnian parliamentary parties.

By fall, Rose's patience seemed exhausted, and he started to take a tougher line. Not against the Serbs, of course. When Bosnian government forces trying to loosen the siege of Sarajevo attacked Serbian forces from within a demilitarized zone, Rose publicly threatened to call in NATO air strikes against the Bosnians. In a meeting with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic,

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Rose went further, warning that he would order NATO to "carpet bomb" Bosnian positions. In contrast, a month earlier Rose's spokesman had explained his decision to limit air strikes against the Serbs to symbolic attacks against individual, unmanned, obsolete targets. "You have to use force in a proportionate, precise and relevant way," he said.

When Rose's threat of air strikes against the Bosnians rang hollow, he sent U.N. ground forces to drive the Bosnians out and blow up their bunkers and trenches. Although the Bosnians were violating the zone, no such action has ever been taken against the Serbs. The U.N. always finds a reason to ignore their more frequent violations. In July, when the Serbs resumed shelling Gorazde, the U.N. said it would not react because the Serbs were only targeting military positions. Yet when the Serbs recently targeted civilians in Sarajevo, killing three children and a woman, Rose's spokesman explained that no air strikes were called for because "the attacks are not militarily significant."

When U.N. forces discovered a Serbian position outside Sarajevo that had been overrun by government forces who killed twenty of the Serbs, the U.N. announced that the dead had been executed, their corpses mutilated. Then, in the face of strong Bosnian denials, the U.N. admitted that the twenty had been battle casualties and none was mutilated. This may not have been the only time that Rose's command drew false allegations against the Bosnians to make it seem that war guilt is equally distributed and thus to dampen calls for anti-Serb action. *Los Angeles Times* correspondent Carol Williams recently reported being told by a U.N. source that in the face of a vicious Serb sniper attack on Sarajevo civilians, "Rose's office ordered U.N. public affairs workers to doctor the next day's 'situation report' to suggest Bosnian government forces were behaving just as badly."

Meanwhile, Rose seems to be intensifying his private war with the Americans. After the Gorazde ultimatum, Rose complained that American support was discouraging Bosnia from capitulating. He believes the current peace plan is unfair to the Serbs. "If you were a Serb, would you accept it?" scoffed one of his aides recently. On Rose's office wall, there is a photo of a medical vehicle apparently destroyed in one of the (American-led) NATO attacks on Serb positions. It is glossed with the sarcastic caption, "NICE ONE, NATO." This was reported by *New York Times* correspondent Roger Cohen, who obviously thought it revealing of Rose's attitude. Unfortunately, the truth is worse. Through inquiries with the U.S. and U.N. military commands, Albert Wohlstetter discovered that the photo is a fraud, a crude bit of Serbian disinformation. No medical vehicle was ever hit by NATO. Rose knew it to be such but kept it hanging. His mission in tatters, there is only one thing Rose can still do for the people he was sent to protect: resign.

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

How to treat a psychological disorder.

THE HAPPINESS SYNDROME

By Maggie Scarf

"Happiness cannot be pursued; it must ensue," I once counseled my then-adolescent daughter, Susie. I was quoting the psychoanalyst-philosopher Victor Frankl. Susie countered that she couldn't "buy into" this point of view; it was buying into passivity. I rejoined with a quote from Hawthorne, which was, as I recollected: "Happiness is like a butterfly, which, if you chase after it, will elude you. If, however, you sit quietly and wait, it will come and light upon your shoulder." Susie suggested a butterfly net—an argument that had a certain undeniable merit.

I had to concede that the Constitution—which grants us the "right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"—was more in line with my daughter's activist point of view. Still, throughout our entire windy, angst-ridden discussion, the two of us remained riveted upon the issue of *pursuing* happiness; we never gave a thought to the more fundamental issue of whether happiness is a desirable state when one *achieves* it.

At the time of the aforementioned conversation, neither I nor anyone I knew had ever considered whether happiness is a good thing or a bad thing. Recently, however, a flurry of academic articles has suggested that happiness may not only be highly abnormal, but, in certain instances, hazardous to a person's health and career.

Granted, this way of thinking about happiness does seem counterintuitive. But, although the current schol-

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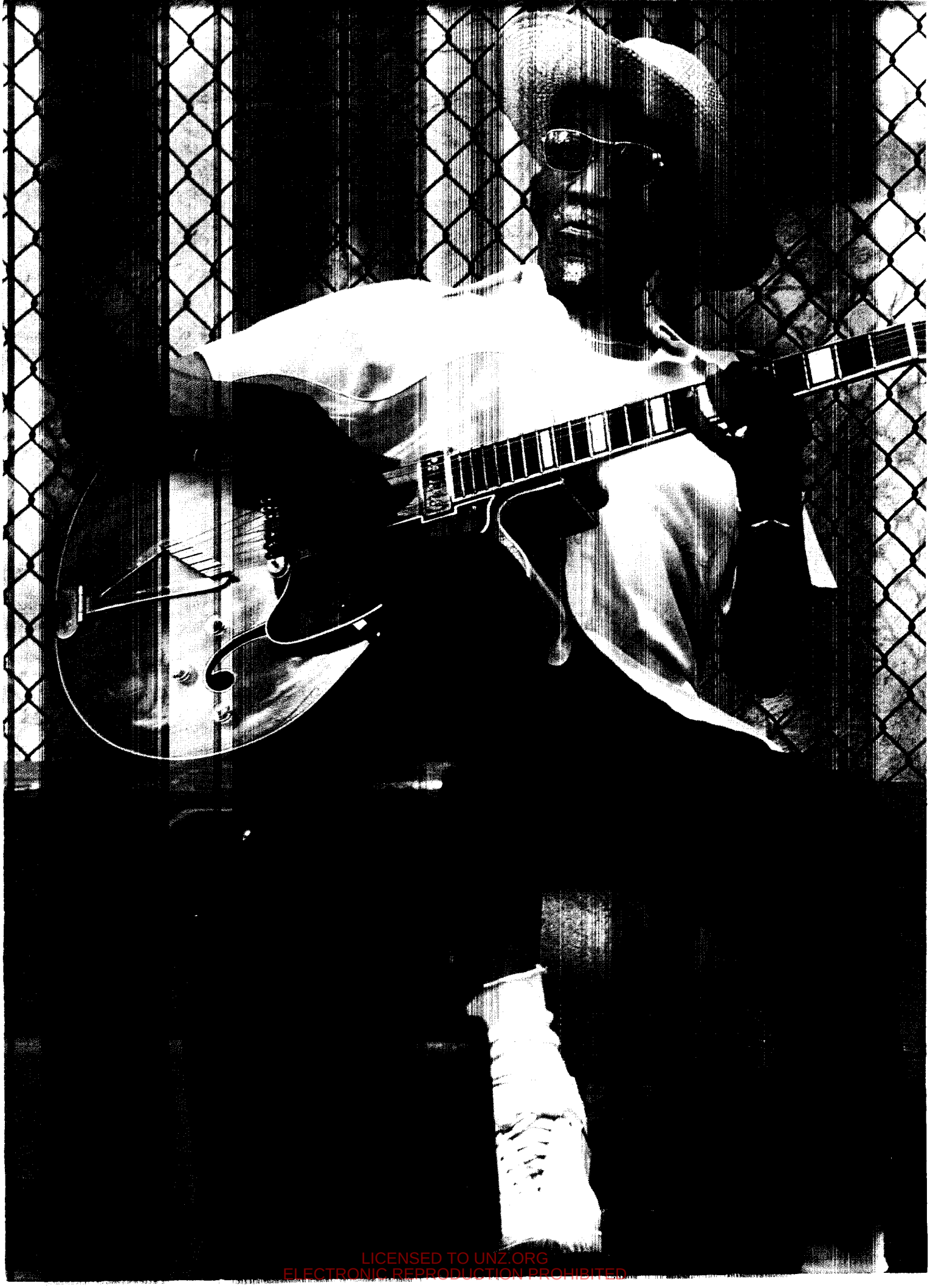

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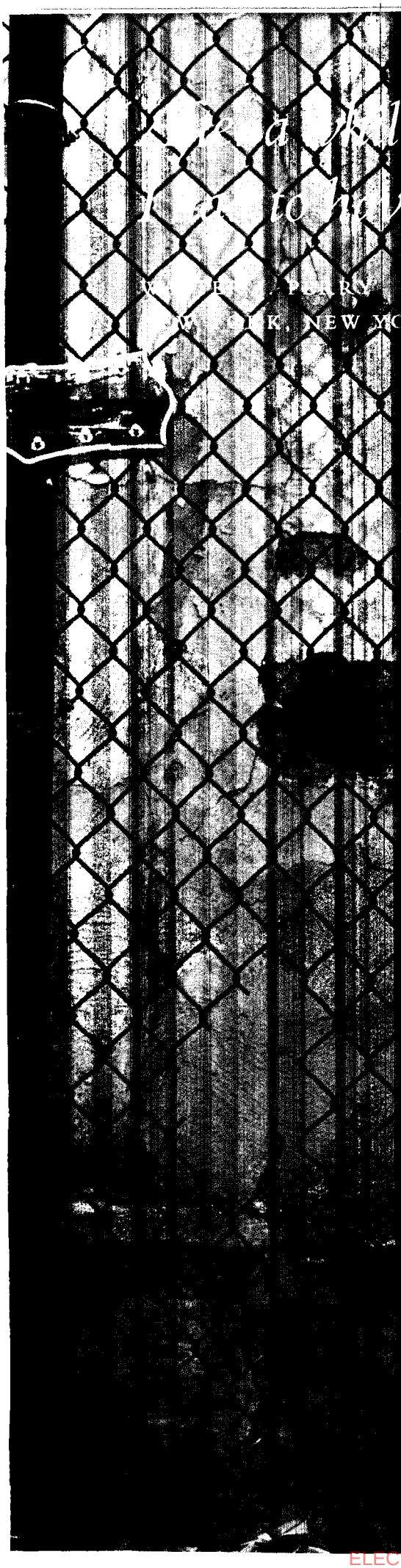

...a pill, nothing helped my knees. ...to have something done."

...PERRY
...YORK, NEW YORK

Walter "The Buzzard" Perry says he was born to be a songwriter. In fact, he carried his guitar with him on the Italian front during World War II and serenaded his platoon. But 15 years ago, he started singing a different kind of blues.

It all began with an aching and swelling in his knees. Some days he couldn't stay at work, the pain was so bad. He even fell in the street and couldn't get up on his own. "I just stayed at home–shut in," he remembers. "It was awful."

Thanks to medical technology developed by the research we do, Walter has two new artificial knees, and he's mobile again.

Our health care system should ensure that this research continues, so companies like Pfizer can develop new medical devices. And help more people like Walter.

"Now I can go anywhere I want to," he said. "I feel good."

Pfizer

We're part of the cure.

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arly arguments are abstract and difficult to paraphrase, I shall try to touch upon the major points in this brief space. In a *Journal of Medical Ethics* article titled, "A Proposal to Classify Happiness as a Psychiatric Disorder," Liverpool University psychologist Richard P. Bentall argues that the so-called syndrome of happiness is a diagnosable mood disturbance that should be included in standard taxonomies of mental illness such as the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual.* Happiness, as Bentall states in his abstract, is "statistically abnormal, consists of a discrete cluster of symptoms, is associated with a range of cognitive abnormalities and probably reflects the abnormal functioning of the central nervous system." (In this regard, as Bentall later notes, happiness resembles other psychiatric disorders such as depression and schizophrenia.)

Although what is meant by "happiness" has never been specified, it seems likely, as Bentall observes, that the condition has "affective, cognitive and behavioral components." The state is usually characterized by recognizable symptoms such as "positive mood, sometimes described as 'elation' or 'joy' or in its milder manifestations 'contentment.' " The behavioral components associated with happiness are, says Bentall, "less easily characterized but particular facial expressions such as 'smiling' have been noted.... Certain kinds of social behavior have also been reported to accompany happiness, including a high frequency of recreational interpersonal contacts, and pro-social actions toward others identified as less happy." These tendencies, he adds in the essay's only sour note, may help to explain one of the most debilitating consequences of happiness: that happy people try to force their condition on their unhappier companions.

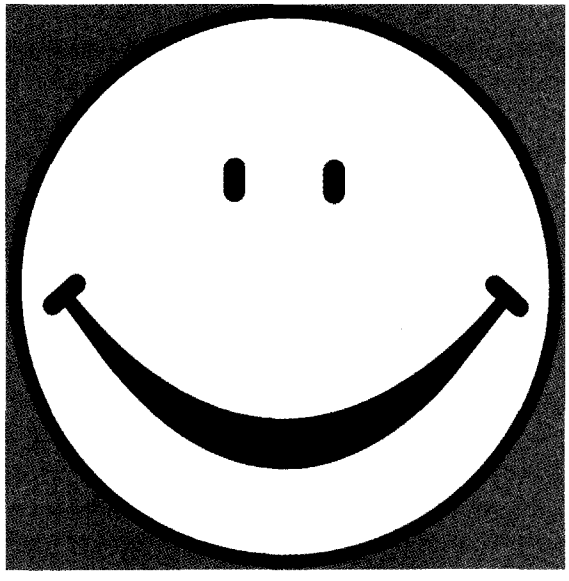

ILLUSTRATION BY BRUCE STEINKE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

What is the frequency of happiness? Controlled research on the subject is scarce and inconclusive. But, as Bentall argues, uncontrolled observations, such as those found in plays, novels and soap operas, indicate "that happiness is a relatively rare phenomenon." A good amount of data of other kinds (such as informal surveys of one's acquaintances) also gives credibility to Bentall's suggestion that episodes of happiness occur infrequently, and are often of markedly brief duration.

What are the causes of happiness? Little is known about its etiology, Bentall informs us, although some risk factors for happiness have been identified (individuals in the higher socioeconomic groupings report more positive affect). Despite sparse scientific data, evidence indicates that both environmental and biological factors are involved. "With respect to the environment, there seems little doubt that discrete episodes of happiness typically follow positive life-events," the psychologist explains. "However, the observation that some people are generally happier than others suggests that less transient"—i.e., inborn and hereditary—"factors may also play an important role."

According to Bentall, one of the most intractable happiness-related problems is its clear-cut association with expansive, celebratory behaviors—eating too much, drinking too much, behaving too impulsively. Overeating and overimbibing correspond with increased health risks, while impetuousness can place a person in dangerous situations. Happiness also may lead to a variety of more mundane and yet far from trivial dysfunctions, as Bentall observes.

Happiness is often related to discernible cognitive abnormalities; happy people regularly exhibit an array of cognitive distortions and deficits. It has been shown that happy people, in comparison with miserable or depressed people, have difficulty retrieving negative events from long-term memory. Bentall also cites "consistent evidence that happy people overestimate their control over environmental events (often to the point of perceiving completely random events as subject to their will), give unrealistically positive evaluations of their own achievements, believe others share their unrealistic opinions about themselves."

While happiness has, he concedes, received little attention from psychopathologists—no formal diagnostic criteria describing the condition are currently available—all evidence strongly suggests that happy people experience a sense of satisfaction in "specific areas of life such as relationships and work, and also in terms of the happy person's belief in his or her own competence and self-efficacy." In this respect, Bentall suggests, individuals suffering from the syndrome of happiness are often out of contact with reality and therefore at a tangible social and biological disadvantage. Bentall proposes that the term "happiness" be removed from future editions of the major diagnostic manuals, to be replaced by the formal description "Major Affective Disorder, Pleasant Type."

Bentall's focus on the "syndrome of happiness" is primarily diagnostic; but in an article on a related topic, Queens College sociologist Fred H. Goldner discusses the potentially devastating social consequences that being too happy by half may set into motion. Goldner's essay "Pronoia" appeared in *Social Problems: Official Journal of the Society for the Study of Social Problems.*

Pronoia is the antithesis of paranoia, the delusory (one hopes) belief that people are saying horrible things behind one's back. The pronoia sufferer has the

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opposite problem; this condition, as Goldner defines it, is marked by "the delusion that others think well of one." The pronoid is possessed by the unswerving belief that anyone who talks behind his or her back is saying the most wonderful, supportive things possible.

According to Goldner, pronoids live in a dangerously rose-tinted universe, one in which "mere acquaintances are seen as close friends. Politeness and the exchange of pleasantries are interpreted as expressions of deep attachments and the promise of future support." These people feel so good about themselves that they tend to be oblivious to negative feedback. In an occupational setting, as Goldner points out, this can lead to fatal mistakes. He notes one typical case:

> John White ... had been discharged from a well-paying corporate position. He wrote a memo to the president suggesting how the president should respond to inquiries about him from search firms or prospective employers. In addition to asking the president to tell others that Jones had resigned and not been fired, he then listed in the memo his major strengths that could be praised to a prospective employer. Among them were: "ability to manage large projects and provide directions"; his "excellent interpersonal skills, particularly in bringing together disparate people to achieve common goals, particularly since people trust me"; and his being "a self-starter with little/no need for direction once goals have been set. I don't need to run to my boss on everything." He could not have put together a more accurate list of the weaknesses that led to his discharge. The president did not respond to the memo, nor had he disagreed with Jones in their last meeting when Jones praised himself. There was really no need to do so, because Jones was leaving and it would have been unpleasant to try to correct Jones's misimpressions. This silence encouraged Jones to believe that his former bosses thought highly of his capabilities—even though they fired him.

John White interpreted the fact that the president of the company had raised no overt objections to the employee's self-directed accolades as evidence that the pair of them were in complete agreement (even though he *was* being dismissed). As Goldner notes, such positive delusions are fueled by the natural reluctance of colleagues and bosses to speak frankly to him, and tell it like it is. The pronoid interprets the courteous silences of others as evidence that everyone around him is full of admiration and in complete accord with whatever positions he takes. His blinders allow him to perceive nothing but the good will with which he believes himself to be surrounded.

Like paranoia, pronoia can be thought of as an individual's strategy for simplifying our increasingly complex and ambiguous social environment. We find ourselves in organizations in which, as Goldner observes, "our occupational tasks do not produce quantifiable or easily measured outputs. The more uncertain the criteria, the less the consensus and objectivity—and the more dependent we are on the guesses about where we stand in the eyes of others. As their opinions become more important in deciding our fate, the greater the likelihood that neuroses about these relationships will develop."

The pronoid's neurosis has to do with the belief that he is indispensable to his superiors, adored by his colleagues and performing brilliantly on the job, while the paranoid's neurosis has to do with delusions that everyone around him is engaged in a conspiracy against him, with the fundamental goal of bringing him down. The pronoid lives in a world that is too good to be true, while the paranoid lives in a world fraught with ill will and malevolent intentions. They have *both* dealt with ambiguity by responding to all social cues in an oversimplified, almost cartoonlike manner.

Here is another of Goldner's gut-wrenching examples:

> John Brown, a university professor, was applying for tenure. He submitted a long letter from someone in the field as evidence of how well his work was received. In fact, the only positive aspects of the letter were the opening expression of interest and a closing sentence saying that Brown was involved in an interesting area of research and should keep the letter writer informed. The rest of the letter was a devastating critique of Brown's book. Brown harmed his own cause because he could only see the expressions of interest as positive reactions which then blinded him from seeing the negative content. As confirmed by a phone call, the opening and closing remarks were but the kind of attempts of a colleague to soften the blow of criticism.

The reader will perhaps have noted that in both accounts of pronoid behavior, the first name of the major player was "John." This is true of every one of Goldner's examples. "All of the pseudonyms I have chosen are John because all of the individuals I observed were men," he explains. "I do not know whether this was a coincidence, or whether pronoia is especially prevalent among men—though I suspect it is the latter."

If I may inject a personal note, let me say that I am in complete agreement. I say this not out of ignorance or prejudice, but because I happen to be married to a person whose way of being has a distinctively pronoid flavor. He sees goodwill and honorable intention everywhere. This may sound pleasant and amiable (it may even arouse envy) but as a steady diet, it can become taxing. My husband was, for example, the only male in America who believed that Ted Kennedy's famous party at Chappaquiddick was just an innocent office outing—and he held on to that belief well beyond the limits of normal credulity. For a while I felt like Ingrid Bergman in *Gaslight*, struggling desperately to focus on what facts I knew with certainty and which of my beliefs must surely be real.

Another time, we threw a party at which a somewhat plastered guest overturned a punch bowl, which landed in the leek soup; two couples left with the wrong spouses; several noisy quarrels broke out; and the hostess seriously considered leaving and staying with our next-door neighbors (the company would never have noticed). After everyone had finally departed, my husband's gaze met mine over a river of litter and debris, and I opened my mouth. I was going to say something like, "I wish I were dead," or "Can't we move to Alaska?" when he intervened and said, "Wasn't that the best party, ever? Everyone had a wonderful time."

He's happy, and sincerely glad to be a pronoid. Or so he says. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Greene on the Screen

In the public mind no famous novelist is more closely associated with film than Graham Greene—because so many of his novels and stories have been adapted for the screen and because critics often note that cinematic techniques affected his writing. What is less widely known, despite the fact that a selection of his reviews was published here in 1972, is that Greene spent four and a half years as a film critic for London weeklies between 1935 and 1940.

Now *all* the reviews have been collected by David Parkinson, along with other related materials—essays, reviews of film books, relevant interviews and lectures and letters, some short documentary film scripts, some film stories and treatments—in **The Graham Greene Film Reader** (Applause Books, 738 pp., $35).

The reviews are the main reason for the book's existence, and rightly so. Greene was a journalist critic, a profession that includes Bernard Shaw and Max Beerbohm among illustrious others, and he knew that his job was both to enlighten as he could and to be invitingly readable. (Academic critics frequently forget the second part; equally often, journalists forget the first part.) But one commonly assumed journalistic function Greene explicitly refused: as bare-bones consumer's guide. The words "don't miss" or "do miss" or their British equivalents do not occur.

Most of these reviews are relatively brief. Almost always, more than one film is discussed in what were obviously magazine columns with rigorous space restrictions. Rarely is a whole column devoted to one film, and we sometimes wish that Greene had been able to expand. Why, then, are these nearly 60-year-old reviews worth reading now?

First, if Greene gives only one full paragraph to a film, he manages to fix its nature (subject and tone), along with comments on individuals whom he likes or dislikes (actors or directors), together with his reasons, including frank prejudices. Yes, a hint of compression touches some of the pieces, but on the whole the perceptions sparkle like a busy jeweler's window.

Second, which contributes mightily to this effect, his style. This style is dialectically opposed to the shape and urgency of the very column that it's used for. Greene writes unhurriedly, precisely, wittily, with the aplomb of the gentleman buff (attempting to maintain a slight air of condescension while being absolutely fascinated by film). Some samples.

> Mr. Charles Boyer's performances are always admirable; you can believe, listening to his deep nervous voice, in the icy country behind his eyes.... Mr. Boyer [seems] condemned by some grim Dante of a film executive to suffer and be redeemed by love and suffer again in endless circles.

> Herr Pommer, the German producer, and Mr. William K. Howard, the American director of [*Fire over England*] ... have caught the very spirit of an English public-schoolmistress's vision of history.

> *Liebesmelodie* is one of those devastatingly gay films of Austrian life: one's spirit withers as the glasses fill.

> Mr. Cagney can do nothing that is not worth watching. On his light hoofer's feet, with his quick nervous hands and his magnificent unconsciousness of the camera, he can pluck distinction out of the least promising part.

> [Sylvia Sidney] disappears into the night without telling [George] Raft that she's going to have a baby, and has it—apparently next day. Physiological tact could hardly be carried further.

Just as we may begin to think that Greene's critical process consists of Wildean reversals ("How unbearable these films of M. Sacha Guitry would be if they were not so successful") or of elegant paraphrase of Movieland silliness, he slips in a pang that could only come from true affection: "I wish there existed an organization with the means to anthologize the excellent sequences that can often be found in the worst films and save them from oblivion." Or amidst the scintillations about ephemera, Greene pauses when the occasion absolutely demands it and discloses the critical mind that underlies the glitter. Apropos of *Modern Times*:

> I am too much an admirer of Mr. Chaplin to believe that the most important thing about his new film is that for a few minutes we are allowed to hear his agreeable and rather husky voice in a song. The little man has at last definitely entered the contemporary scene: there has always before been a hint of "period" about his courage and misfortunes.... There were occasions ... when he seemed almost to go back to Dickens. The change is evident in his choice of heroine. [His prior fair-haired leading women] never appeared again in leading parts, for they were quite characterless. But Miss Paulette Goddard, dark, grimy, with her

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Browning Version. *Albert Finney puts a long, varied acting career at the service of his role—an English schoolmaster belatedly finding out about life. Terence Rattigan's play has a soft ending here, but all the acting is fine. (Reviewed 10/31/94)* **Hoop Dreams.** *A patient, perceptive documentary that traces the high school years of two black Chicago basketball aspirants. (10/17/94)* **Pulp Fiction.** *Another item for those (many) who want to spend two hours vicariously murdering. Generally well done, however, with energy and some humor. (11/14/94)* **Vanya on 42nd Street.** *I hope to see this every year for the rest of my life. A run-through "rehearsal" of "Uncle Vanya" by a cast who have been working on and off for five years under Andre Gregory. A unique treasure. (11/7/94)* **—SK**

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amusing urban and plebeian face, is a promise that the little man will no longer linger at the edge of mawkish situation, the unfair pathos of the blind girl and the orphan child.... For the first time the little man does not go off alone.... He goes in company looking for what may turn up.

Occasionally a passage provides, consciously or not, a glimpse into the novelist. The following was written in 1938, the year of *Brighton Rock*, which is known as his first explicitly Catholic novel:

> Murder, if you are going to take it seriously at all, is a religious subject; the interest of a detective-story is the pursuit of exact truth, and if we are at times impatient with the fingerprints, the time-tables and the butler's evasions, it is because the writer, like some early theologians, is getting bogged down in academic detail.

The once-notorious review of *Wee Willie Winkie* with Shirley Temple (1937) is included in this book. In 1938 Twentieth Century-Fox successfully sued Greene and his magazine for libel because Greene had written that "the owners of the child star" were exploiting "her neat and well-developed rump" in tight trousers for "her admirers—middle-aged men and clergymen." The verdict made the review unreprintable, yet here it is—and this collection was previously published in Britain. (The editor, Parkinson, includes a letter of Greene's to *The Times* in 1981, refuting the much-repeated assertion that the libel verdict put the magazine out of business. It was in a shaky state and would have closed anyway.) Unlike many scandals of the past, this review still seems daring. It would still ruffle feathers, which of course is not to say that it is untrue.

Overall, this assemblage of Greene's criticism is a boon. Not much of it is as searching as the Chaplin excerpt above, but all of it is the response of a quicksilver mind expressed in savory prose. Time has added an agre eable patina: our knowledge that these reviews were written by a subsequently celebrated novelist and screenwriter. He himself thought, in 1984, that his film criticism, if republished, might seem "a little bit *vieux jeu*." But the *jeu* is not remotely *vieux*.

The second half of the book provides a good deal that's interesting (including the fact that he rarely went to films in later life). In the interviews, sharp obiter dicta abound, and Greene occasionally is surprisingly candid. Here is a section that was omitted from the preface to the screenplay of *The Third Man* when it was first published in 1950:

> Writing a novel does not become easier with practice. The slow discovery by a novelist of his individual method can be exciting, but a moment comes in middle age when he feels he no longer controls his method; he has become its prisoner.... I had tried to escape from my prison by writing for the films, but *The Third Man* only beckoned me into another and more luxurious prison.

That film was directed by Carol Reed, which leads to a personal note. Reading this book, I watched for and especially relished Greene's comments on Reed and the French actor-director Louis Jouvet. In London in 1951 Greene took my wife and me to lunch and, among much else, was lavish in his praise of Reed, for whom he also had written *The Fallen Idol*. (He worked only once more with Reed—*Our Man in Havana*, 1959.) And he was mournful about Jouvet, with whom he had been discussing a project. (Jouvet had just died.) •

Robert Brustein on Theater

The Merchant of Venice Beach

Peter Sellars's production of **The Merchant of Venice** at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago is a four-hour media-soaked event that loses half its patrons after the first curtain. Don't be surprised. Sellars has been dividing audiences at least since his Harvard undergraduate days, when he performed the entire *Ring* cycle with marionettes and staged *Antony and Cleopatra* in the Adams House swimming pool. He is an artist endowed with great whimsy and considerable imagination, but not, in my opinion, with a commensurate conceptual mind. This imbalance tends to make his productions appear both daring and predictable at the same time.

Sellars approaches classical operas and plays with a lot of dazzle but usually the same overall concept, which is to substitute for the original historical setting a modish contemporary equivalent. He seems most comfortable, in other words, in the role of transcultural travel agent, booking rooms for *The Marriage of Figaro*

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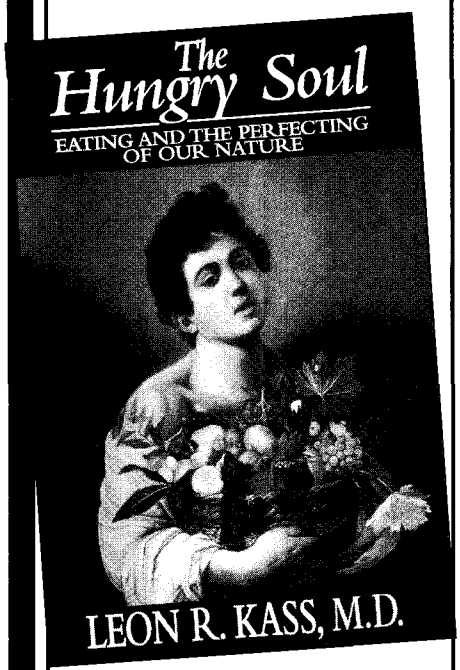

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in the Trump Tower, making reservations for *Julius Caesar* in the Nile Hilton. However he may annoy people with this kind of fashionable time-tripping, Sellars is rarely boring. His *Merchant of Venice* is designed to irritate the bejesus out of you, which explains why so many skipped out on the second part. But it is never dull; and, to be honest, I think it deserves a certain grudging respect.

Merely to describe the production concept is to be complicit in its self-consciousness and preciosity, so I wouldn't be surprised if readers decide to walk out on my review as well. Visually, Sellars has abandoned his customary scenic display (not to mention his favorite set designer, Adrienne Lobel), settling for a bare stage festooned with television monitors. When the lights come up, Antonio is explaining to Salerio and Solanio why he feels so sad ("It wearies me, you say it wearies you"). His lines are from the text, except that his companions are now pushing video and sound equipment into his face. Obviously, Antonio's depression is an item for the evening news. So is virtually everything else that happens in this prime-time world. Privacy no longer exists. Every major speech is miked, every major action televised. Shylock's poignant "Hath not a Jew eyes?" is an occasion for a celebrity interview. Salerio and Solanio feed us exposition like two sports announcers commenting on a game at halftime. The trial scene is played out on Court T.V. This *Merchant of Venice* is channel surfing for couch potatoes. If you get bored by the text, you can always switch to Warhol-like videos (surf scenes, pool scenes, garden scenes) projected by Sellars on the alternate monitors.

When Antonio begins fondling Bassanio's thigh (also on camera), we learn the source of his blues: his gay partner has conceived a heterosexual passion for Portia. I'm puzzled why the melancholy Antonio would be willing to risk his fortune (and his life) to help Bassanio court another lover, and a woman at that. But since this merchant conducts his business not in Venice, Italy, but rather in Venice Beach, California, perhaps Sellars is trying to tell us something pertinent about West Coast polymorphous perversity.

Racially mixed Southern California certainly accounts for the culturally diverse makeup of the cast. Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano and all their friends are played by Latinos, sometimes in zoot suits, fresh from the barrio. Portia, Nerissa and another servant are Asians. Launcelot Gobbo and Old Gobbo are white. Shylock, Tubal and Jessica are black. Only the Prince of Morocco is of the color Shakespeare intended, though hardly of the class, since he is conceived as a street dude sporting gold chains and a woolen cap. It goes without saying that this is hardly conventional non-traditional casting, which is typically color-blind. Rather, it is determinedly color-conscious, even color-perverse. To cast blacks as Jews, for example, may strike one as pure accessorizing—multicultural chic. Yet, occasionally, the choice begins to make some vague subterranean sense.

I suspect Sellars would like us to see the play as an essay on the subject of race and sex. For example, not only have Antonio and Bassanio been having an extra-textual love affair. So have black Jessica and white Launcelot Gobbo, creating in them a state of separation anxiety, even (following her abduction) sullenness and anger. When Lorenzo, Jessica's Latino lover, says of the letter written by his African American mistress that "whiter than the paper it is writ on is the fair hand that writ," we experience an unexpected shock that startles the scene into irony. (The same thing happens after Portia's dismissive remark about the Moroccan Prince, "Let all of his complexion chose me so.")

Additionally, Sellars uses the sequence where Portia and Nerissa disguise themselves as lawyers as an extended commentary on feminist cross-dressing. Portia, attired in a double-breasted Melrose Avenue suit, clutches her crotch and launches into a satirical rap on macho males ("We are accomplished with that we lack"), strutting like a stud and pretending her shoe is a penis. Similarly, the harmless trick that she and Nerissa play on Bassanio and Gratiano—demanding the men's rings as a reward for freeing Antonio—later becomes an occasion for spats about their relationships that may impair them permanently, while Jessica, always sulky with Lorenzo, walks out on him after learning she is Shylock's heir. These recriminations make the conclusion of the show extremely bleak, hardly the stuff of romantic comedy. But the dark ending is typical of how the entire production has been tilted. Sellars changes the meaning of every single line of Shakespeare's play, which makes his refusal to cut a single line seem more like loyalty to his own clever ideas than to the playwright.

And he has certainly managed to skirt the central problem of the work for modern audiences. There is nothing here to stir the feathers of the Anti-Defamation League. To cast Shylock as an African American businessman instead of a usurious Jew not only blurs the anti-Semitic overtones of the play, it also changes it from a satire on a menacing outsider into an indictment of American racism. Phoning Tubal about the loss of

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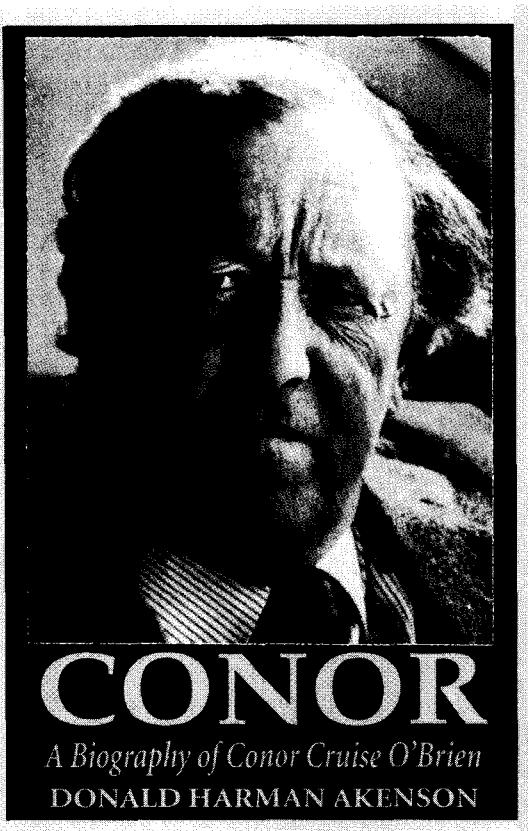
his daughter and his ducats, Shylock begins sobbing so hard over his dead wife and the precious jewel she gave him that he can't continue the call. As Paul Butler plays the part, with hooded hauteur, towering dignity and gathering rage, this Shylock is seeking vengeance for every humiliation suffered by black people since the days of slavery.

In the climactic trial scene, as Shylock sharpens his knife on the sole of his shoe preparing to cut his pound of flesh, the video monitors are dominated by scenes of the L.A. riots. This is a typically suggestive but typically inexact analogy, since Butler's Shylock looks more like Clarence Thomas than Rodney King, and since it is Antonio rather than Shylock who is being tried. Nevertheless, the scene is highly charged, its ominousness underscored by sound designer Bruce Odland's moody piano arpeggios. Shylock waves away Portia's mercy speech as if it's nothing but racist cant. But when he takes the stand to testify about his daughter, he is once again racked with grief.

The Duke (Del Close)—like Judge Ito, he allows one camera in the courtroom—permits Portia to humiliate, debase and disinherit Shylock, leaving the audience with the sense not that a vengeful scapegoat has been ejected from a just society, but rather that a black man can never obtain justice either from whites or Latinos. Following the anticlimactic hassle over the rings, the play ends in darkness and gloom. Lorenzo and Jessica are Splitsville. Gratiano throws his ring at Nerissa's feet. Only Bassanio and Portia are allowed a moment of reconciliation, as he puts his coat over her shoulders and she strokes his hand.

It is important to add that the cast provides the most confident acting I have yet seen under Sellars's direction. In addition to the superb Shylock of Paul Butler and the fatigued Duke of Del Close, Elaine Tse makes a volatile Portia, Rene Rivera an appealing Lorenzo, Geno Silva a suave Antonio and John Ortiz an engaging Bassanio. Dunya Ramicova's costumes and James F. Ingalls's lighting are tailor-made for postmodern deconstruction, and the audiovisual technology is handled with efficiency. That very efficiency, however, makes the evening, in the end, more a media event than a work of theater. Some vital spark of humanity is buried under the stockpile of bright ideas, just as the intrinsic quality of the play is submerged beneath the extrinsic impact of the interpretation. When a little human feeling is allowed to escape from all the high-tech ostentation, as in the shaking shoulders of Shylock, then this *Merchant of Venice* bursts momentarily into life. Whatever my caveats about the interpretation,



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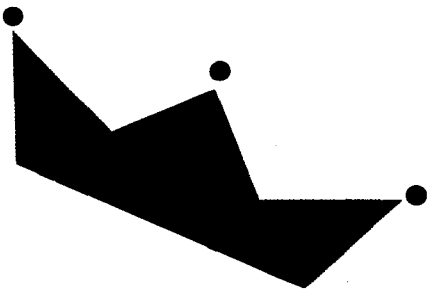

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whatever the audience reception, the Goodman Theatre deserves congratulations for mounting the production. It is an important (I won't say a healthy) antidote to the recurrent realism of the Chicago School.

At the Hartford Stage Company, an entirely different brand of Shakespeare is being presented in Mark Lamos's version of **Richard III**. This one is being done Berliner Ensemble-style on a relatively spare stage. Darrel Maloney's lighting scheme features naked industrial lights that throw crude silhouettes on the back walls (thus allowing Richard literally "to see my shadow as I pass"). These harsh effects, along with the Brechtian woolen and leather costumes, reminded me of Sam Mendes's production of the play at the Dunmar Warehouse in London. The efficient staging reminded me even more of Steven Berkoff's military choreography, though Lamos allows his actors a little more space to act.

This *Richard III* is a perfectly serviceable, somewhat superficial version of the play, decently performed by the able cast, especially the wailing women (Anne Pitoniak as the Duchess of York, Gordana Rashovich as Queen Elizabeth and Joan Copeland, volcanic as Queen Margaret). The men all have well-tuned instruments and act with confidence if no particular daring. The exception is Richard Thomas, who is daring in the extreme. Given Thomas's mild and sensitive bearing, one would think him better cast as Richard II than as the villainous crookback King.

But it is a wonder how a passionate commitment can transform an actor. Thomas plays Richard like the runt of the litter, pushing away his siblings to obtain his mother's teat, that is, the crown. Wearing electrified reddish hair that makes him look a little like the director Peter Sellars, carrying a useless left arm like a stump plastered to his chest, he fully communicates both the diabolical and the comic aspects of the character, understanding that both are based on a total lack of illusion. When Anne spits at him, he tastes her spittle with relish, then crawls toward her on his stomach, his hump rolling up and down, like some monstrous centipede. Thomas takes a lot of chances. Not all of them pay off. And the Hartford production does not always get below the flash and flourish of its choreography to the emotional life beneath. But to watch Richard Thomas continually advancing his art with one challenging role after another is to have one's flagging belief restored in the courage and the commitment of the American actor. •

Pro and Con

BY GEOFFREY O'BRIEN

Brando: Songs My Mother Taught Me by Marlon Brando

(Random House, 468 pp., $25)

Brando: The Biography by Peter Manso

(Hyperion, 1,118 pp., $29.95)

As I drive down Sunset Boulevard, Marlon Brando's face looms up on a billboard, an advertisement for Peter Manso's 1,100-page biography. Or rather it's half of his face from one portrait laid side by side with half from another, the cover designer's instantly readable ideogram for a fractured personality. The apparition is incongruous enough to provoke spontaneous laughter, a slightly unsettled laughter paying tribute to a lingering iconic force: whatever I had expected to see hovering over the Los Angeles streetscape, it wasn't *that* face.

If the billboard is, from one perspective, a workaday artifact of '90s America—the Disney Corporation angling for a return on a substantial publishing investment—it's also jarring. For although Brando has been part of the cultural geography of the whole postwar period, he has been a part that always seemed out of place: initially an icon of instability and intrusion, later of implosion and withdrawal. As an advertisement, a brand name, up there with Guess? jeans and Obsession for Men, he makes for a bizarre product, ill at ease on any shelf. It seems like the latest

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peculiar transmutation of an element that was never at rest.

An early colleague of Brando's commented, "You could write a whole chapter on the ways he could make people feel uncomfortable," and indeed his art of acting could be read above all as an art of inducing unease. From the start he was an object lesson in the smashing of polite distinctions, the invasion of social space. For anyone growing up in the '50s, his name was a part of the language learned relatively early: not so much the name of an individual as a mysterious ideogram bound up with all the elusive connotations of bongos, motorcycles, the Method, girls in black lace stockings, torn T-shirts, mumbling and a defiance taking the form of sullen withdrawal.

Beyond all else, he was a teacher of behavior. In Anthony Quinn's words, "Everybody started behaving like Brando." (Including of course a generation of actors, Ralph Meeker and a hundred other "Brando types.") *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *The Wild One* and *On the Waterfront* were a lexicon of slur and overspill, a catalog of slouches, drawls, nudges, grins, enraged outbursts, totterings, groans, soul-piercing glances. He proposed a different way for men to be. Talking was a small part of it, although his line readings were savored and endlessly recycled. Adolescent boys vied for the best replication of Marlon's reading of "Have you ever heard of the Napoleonic code?" (*Streetcar*) or "What do I get? A one-way ticket to Palookaville" (*Waterfront*) or "You scum-sucking pig!" (*One-Eyed Jacks*).

But here the tensing of eyebrows, the slackening of lips, the flexing of muscles, even the pouring of sweat were indispensable components of the performance. It was acting in which the whole body was implicated. Several generations of moviegoers internalized the way he turned his face into a mask of suffering, spoke with eyes averted or closed, laughed as if it were a form of intimate communication with himself, dragged his battered body toward the gate in *On the Waterfront*, sagged under the whip in *One-Eyed Jacks*.

That he was, so often in those performances, on the receiving end of violence could not conceal the far greater capacity for inflicting violence coiled inside him. It is still possible to be shocked by the moment in *A Streetcar Named Desire* when, as Vivien Leigh's Blanche Du Bois spins out a line of evasive chatter, he shouts: "Now how about cuttin' the rebop!" People sat in the dark waiting for Brando to erupt. What differentiated him from other actors was that unpredictable suddenness. Rapid lunges came out of nowhere, cut people off, seemed to threaten actual harm to the actors, and to the fiction that this was only a scene in a movie. (It worked again years later in *The Godfather* when, as Al Martino's whining crooner asked what he should do, Brando's Don Corleone leapt with amazing speed out of a courtly repose, collared Martino, and shouted: "You could act like a man!") In one of the few revealing passages of his sort-of-autobiography, *Songs My Mother Taught Me*, Brando writes: "I had—and still have—an intense hatred of loud, sudden noises and of being startled, and these could cause me to explode." He who has been hurt by being startled startles everybody else in retaliation.

The crucial outbursts were over almost as soon as they began, all the more precious for the fact that if you blinked you missed them. On video, such moments can be watched again and again, and it is almost irresistible to indulge in that once inconceivable luxury; but the magic in the movie theater was the wait for the moment to arrive, knowing it would be over in an instant. It was worth waiting ninety minutes for a single grimace, a sudden isolated cry. That tyranny of duration, instilling a sense of anticipation tinged with a sense of dread, was in a sense what movies were about: the power of a performance lay in its absolute control of timing, a power inevitably undercut by the ability to rewind or fast forward. To that extent the full effect of Brando's art may be lost even as his performances are preserved.

Growing up with Brando as a '50s star was growing up with the aftermath of a shock. The overwhelming impact of Brando's first stage performances in the late '40s can be gauged from the words of his teacher Stella Adler: "He's the most keenly aware, the most empathetical human being alive." A prodigy of sensitivity, his antennae frighteningly alert, he was like someone who had escaped being molded by society. Marlene Dietrich saw him in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and declared him "the most natural boy she'd seen." A Kaspar Hauser, a wild child intuitively demolishing the strictures of what passed for classical acting to lay bare raw feeling: this was the myth of Brando as the man born to redeem acting, a myth consonant with the more or less contemporary myths adhering to jazz and action painting and modern dance and coffee house poetry.

In the overall scheme of '50s culture, however, the connotations were also inescapably comedic. "Doing Brando" was every comic's last resort, good for a laugh when all else failed. He was all over the place: lovingly delineated in

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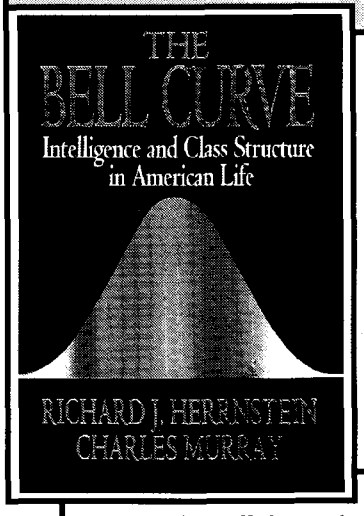

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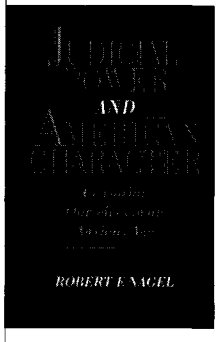

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caricature in *Mad*; incarnated by a mimic on T.V. in the requisite torn T-shirt yelling: "Stel-la!"; alluded to in an MGM musical (Dolores Gray in *It's Always Fair Weather* boasting that she has a man who's "Clifton Webb and Marlon Brando combined"). A little later, Frank Gorshin would do the ultimate Brando burlesque as the mumbling, self-absorbed hipster screen idol Blake Barton in *Bells Are Ringing*.

His mere existence seemed to call for an explanation. That already made him different from other movie stars; people didn't need to find reasons for Van Heflin or Jimmy Stewart. Brando was treated as a portentous figure, a kind of incarnate message. The French critic who compared him to John the Baptist (a John the Baptist announcing, in suitably hyperbolic fashion, the coming of James Dean as Christ) was by no means singular in his rhetorical excess. Hyperbolic phrases like "indisputably the greatest living actor" have clung to him like a birthright: an unwanted birthright, by his own account. On the evidence of his memoir, postwar America was a place where everybody but Brando wanted to be Brando. It's hard enough being an actor, even if you believe (as he once told an interviewer) that "actors get paid for doing nothing and it all adds up to nothing"; being an ideogram must be considerably tougher. Small wonder that he showed early signs of wanting out.

Explanations of his talent were succeeded by explanations of the waste or the collapse or the deliberate destruction of his talent. By the mid-'60s, Brando's career was becoming the kind of public disaster guaranteed to provoke voyeuristic pleasure coupled with appropriate expressions of moral disapproval. A decade's worth of commercial and critical failures, stretching from *Mutiny on the Bounty* to *Candy*, cast Brando as a self-absorbed diva perversely indifferent to the debacles he provoked. I recall from that era the affronted tone taken by so many critics, as if Brando had personally offended them by failing to live up to their assessments of his potential.

What was so widely perceived as betrayal or dereliction could also be seen as a further revelation, the peeling away of another layer in order to demonstrate that what passed in the '50s for unmediated emotional truth came from a consummate trickster's bag of wiles and ruses. He was using the same methods, but to almost campy effect, distancing himself from character and movie in a way that was as fascinating as it was destructive. Increasingly quirky, self-parodying, clownish or grotesque, Brando seemed to be in the throes of creating a Kabuki theater of one out of the wreckage of such otherwise unwatchable movies as *The Ugly American*, *Bedtime Story* or *The Night of the Following Day*.

His career lay under such a curse at that point that when he achieved possibly his most inventive and concentrated single performance, as the repressed homosexual army officer in John Huston's *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, both performance and movie sank virtually unnoticed. Instead it was the reassuring hamminess of his Corleone in *The Godfather* that would, however transiently, restore his standing.

I don't know why it should be thought necessary to sit in judgment on this career—as if the 70-year-old Brando were to be called into the dock to justify his existence—but we are invited to such a judgment by the simultaneous publication of *Songs My Mother Taught Me* and *Brando*, Manso's doorstopper of a biography. Neither of these books has anything like the weight of their advertising and promotion budgets.

Songs My Mother Taught Me reads like the transcript of an extensive but none-too-probing interview, threading a frequently evasive path among the minefields and reminding us that when it comes to self-explanation, Brando has always been his own worst enemy. Truman Capote's profile in *The New Yorker* in 1956, "The Duke in His Domain," was devastating precisely because Capote needed only Brando's own words to skewer him:

> "Anyway, I have *friends*. No. No, I don't," he said, verbally shadowboxing. "Oh, sure I do," he decided, smoothing the sweat on his upper lip. "I have a great many friends. Some I don't hold out on. I let them know what's happening. You have to trust somebody. Well, not all the way. . . ."

With Brando one never knows if it is a case of self-knowledge masquerading as bewilderment or bewilderment masquerading as self-knowledge. "I have spent almost seven decades examining every aspect of my life trying to understand the forces that made me what I am," he writes, and his major conclusion seems to be that nothing is his fault because "everything we do is a product of . . . biochemical reactions."

Whatever the nature of those reactions, their causes evidently lie far back in Brando's middle-class childhood in Nebraska and Illinois, in the theatrically gifted mother who "preferred getting drunk to caring for us" but whose alcoholized breath had "a sweetness I lack the vocabulary to describe" and the

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salesman father he describes as "emotionally destructive ... a frightening, silent, brooding, angry, hard-drinking, rude man, a bully who loved to give orders and issue ultimatums"—not to mention the housekeeper he slept with naked as a child ("I sat there looking at her body and fondling her breasts, and arranged myself on her and crawled all over her"), to whose abrupt departure to get married he attributes a lifelong sense of abandonment: "From that day forward, I became estranged from this world." Brando's descriptions of his childhood have a sense of the power of human relationships oddly lacking from his account of his adult years.

The two books are positioned almost too neatly as the defense and the prosecution, with Brando's plea of good intentions struggling against emotional damage coming up against Manso's relentless array of anecdotes designed to illustrate a life of deception and manipulation. More dossier than biography, *Brando* comes across, despite its elaborate scholarly apparatus, as an exercise in gossip-mongering. His ear cocked for every abject story ever told about his subject, Manso's tone alternates between perfunctory psychologizing and clucking disapproval.

However accurate his delineation of Brando as sexual predator, exploitative friend, derelict parent and recklessly unprofessional performer, a biography on this scale demanded more empathy for its subject, however monstrous. The monstrosity can hardly be doubted. Still, to have accepted the fact and gone on from there would have yielded more interesting conclusions than Manso's method of proceeding, which is to register perpetual astonishment as the excesses pile up.

And when the judge reaches his verdict, it has a familiar ring:

> The icon of our generation, the larger-than-life symbol of rebellion, anti-establishment values and artistic commitment—in a sense, he owed us more. At least the question had to be asked: Isn't a genius who has pushed the boundaries and probed the depths of our psyche obligated to the culture to continue the quest?

The notion that icons owe some kind of debt to the culture that packages and fetishizes them is dubious enough to elicit strong sympathy for Brando's voluntary withdrawal. There is something more than a little hypocritical about Manso raising the banner of "rebellion" and "anti-establishment values" when he has just compiled a volume of scurrilous and prurient anecdotes designed to make Brando look as bad as possible. The tone of high moralism is as inappropriate as the opening epigraph from Primo Levi, as if Brando's misdoings were comparable to the worst crimes of all.

How much does it matter, in the end, whether Brando is to be conceptualized as victim or victimizer, whether his troubles are attributed to being the child of alcoholic parents who didn't give him enough attention, to an unbreachable narcissism, to a paranoid need to control everyone around him or to the vagaries of his biochemical reactions? It might be more appropriate to file him under the notion of taboo, a force at once numinous and destructive, worthy of respect and best kept at a distance. It might be more precise to say not that Brando dissipated his energies but that they dissipated him, and to find it remarkable that a creature of such prodigious compulsions, who evidently has spent a great deal of time not knowing what to do with himself, should have managed nonetheless to accomplish as much as he has.

What Manso fails to address—and what Brando, with his unveiled contempt for the vocation of acting, finds it hard to articulate—is the connection between the art and the rest of the mess. If he has been a con man ("one of the best con artists in the world," according to director Arthur Penn), a manipulator,

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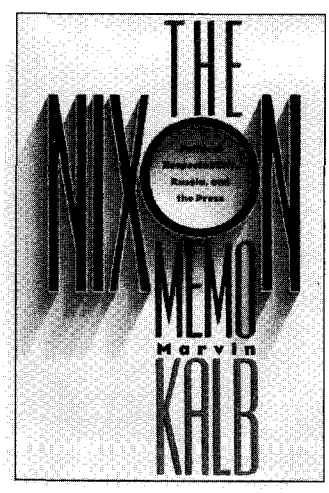

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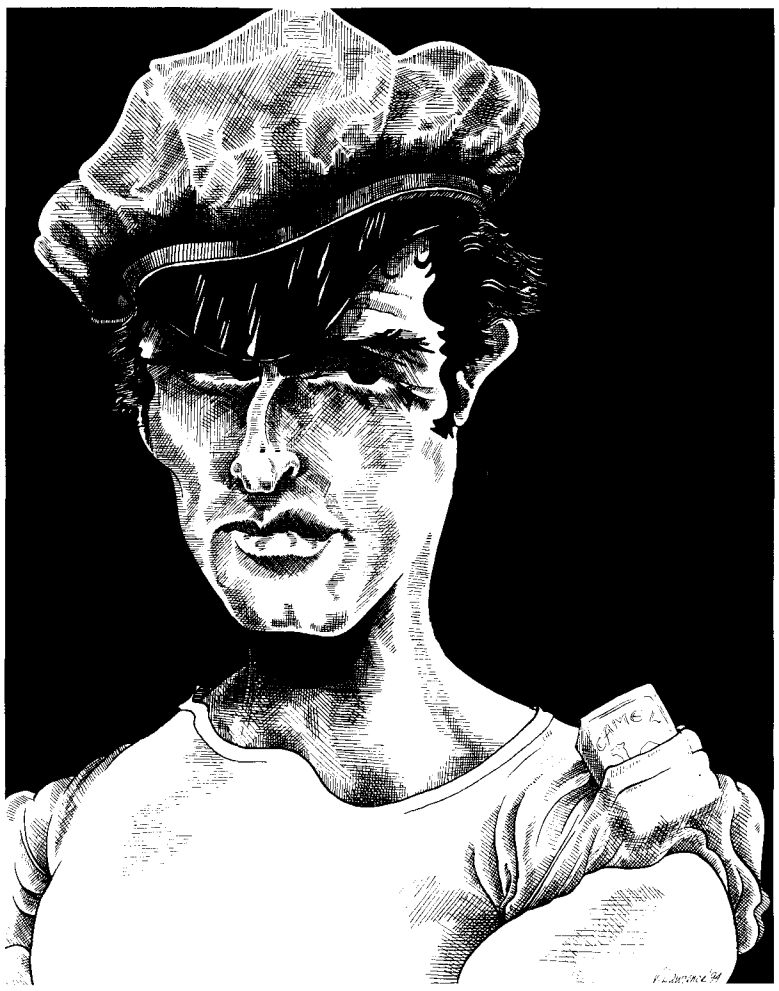
a seducer, a vengeful schemer, these were not aberrations but alternate aspects of the same freakish talent that won applause in front of the camera, that talent of which Stella Adler gave such a chilling and evidently accurate description: "He's absolutely aware of everything that's going on in a person. If you left the room, he could *be* you."

"I think I'd have made a good con man," Brando writes, with the disarming air of coming clean that in itself feels like a con. "I'm good at telling lies smoothly, giving an impression of things as they are not and making people think I'm sincere. A good con man can fool anybody, but the first person he fools is himself." There is no way, of course, to gauge the sincerity of this passage, which gives it a kind of elegance. The con, like all cons, is bottomless and boundless. In the same way there is no discernible difference between the sincere self-deprecation of Brando's character in *Sayonara* paying court to a Japanese woman of aristocratic mien ("Maybe my American manners are embarrassing") and the deceitful self-deprecation of his character in *One-Eyed Jacks* preparing to defraud a Mexican woman of aristocratic mien ("I never did have much upbringing ... never had a chance to be around fine ladies like yourself").

Brando's contempt for acting is the con man's contempt for the suckers: "As Hitler demonstrated, one of the basic characteristics of the human psyche is that it is easily swayed by suggestion ... it is the job of the actor to manipulate this suggestibility." As anyone who has ever been taken by one knows, con men are among the scariest of people precisely because conning themselves is an essential part of their technique: to doubt them is to threaten them. A con man has to preserve the reality of the con—a reality that is like a play or movie—because to shatter it would be to reveal him to himself as well as to the intended mark.

The contempt for acting slides all too easily into a contempt for filmmaking in general, and Brando doesn't disguise his penchant for dominating directors he perceives as indecisive. ("In a close-up or a shot taken over the shoulder—anything close—give him nine bad takes, blow your lines, give a weak performance and wear him down. Then, finally, when you know he's tired and frustrated, you give him the one take in which you do it the way it should be done.") Brando's filmography, with its high percentage of mediocre films by mediocre directors, makes one wonder whether he's drifted into working with directors whom he knew he could manipulate—even though he did his best work when the forcefulness of the director (Kazan, Mankiewicz, and Huston, and in their different ways Coppola and Bertolucci) challenged his own.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The most characteristic Brando expression may be the broad grin that offers itself as an expression of an impossibly guileless, "aw shucks" friendliness. It really does bear an uncanny resemblance to a guileless smile, until its demon-mask afterimage reveals it as a mesmerizing technique of the confidence trickster at his most assured. Brando never resembles a Kabuki mask more than when he is grinning.

The grin is the diametrical opposite of the sorrowful mask of inner pain worn by Terry Malloy among his pigeons, or the Air Force pilot in *Sayonara* as he walks meditatively on a Japanese bridge, or the hero of *One-Eyed Jacks* sitting in soulful Heathcliff fashion by the sea as the Hugo Fregonese music swells up. This was the Brando whose heartfelt, little-boy-lost style of wooing—"Well, that's my sad tale, and when it's over I was hopin' you'd come away with me"—was studied with great care by teenage boys who could sense its effectiveness.

That the obverse of that mask of sensitivity was a cunning cruelty was not so easy to make out, given how successfully Brando evaded any actorly representation of that cruelty. The characters he played might be sick, hurt, misguided, confused, repressed, but rarely seemed to take pleasure in cruelty even if they inflicted it: it hurt them as much as the victim. Yet in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, as Manso points out, Brando succeeded in altering the dynamics of Tennessee Williams's play by building the audience's sympathy for Stanley Kowalski to such an extent that it became implicated in the destruction of Blanche, relishing and even laughing at every psychological blow.

The one movie in which this covert sadism becomes open is under the guise of comedy in *Bedtime Story*, an incredibly mean-spirited farce made more so by the inappropriate brutality of Brando's portrayal of a professional seducer and despoiler of women. He recalls the filming of it as his most enjoyable filmmaking experience, perhaps not surprisingly, seeing how closely its mood dovetails with another disarmingly blunt passage in *Songs My Mother Taught Me*:

> I have always been lucky with women. There have been many of them in my life, though I hardly ever spent more than a couple of minutes with any of them. I've had far too many affairs to think of myself as a normal, rational man.... With women, I've had what you might call a Rolodex life. I enjoy identifying and pushing the right emotional buttons of women—which usu-

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ally means making them feel that they are of value to me and offering them security for themselves and their children.

If nothing else, the biographical material in these books makes it possible to look again at Brando's screen work, in terms not of acting method but of narrative. It is a story that he has been telling, a story about sex and violence, whose pivotal motive is revenge. Brando, again, lays out the dynamics baldly, although without offering much in the way of details:

> If I met a man who had a certain kind of overt masculinity, he became my enemy. I would find his weakness, then exploit it. I adopted his manner until I made a fool of him, which often took the form of sleeping with his wife. I used to be very vengeful.

In that light *One-Eyed Jacks*, the only film he directed, becomes the clearest statement of what he is, and a profoundly anti-heroic one despite the vistas, the cavalcades, and the Hugo Fregonese music. It's basically a movie about the pleasures of seducing a colleague's daughter and then shooting him in the back when he gets mad about it. Although the emotional harshness of the drama is blurred by an imposed ending, *One-Eyed Jacks* looks today like a surprisingly honest self-portrait. The gratuitousness of its violence, widely noted at the time of its release, has certainly aged better than the world-saving pretensions of some of his later efforts. The man who announced in an interview that "I've spent ten years on the couch and I still don't know what to do with the urge to kill" was clearly entitled to make a movie about violence.

After all, what has dated most badly in Brando's classic performances is the heart-choking sincerity of the love scenes in *The Wild One* or *On the Waterfront*. His miming of tenderness now seems like a sentimental diversion from his primary concern with the dynamics of power. If it isn't always possible to detect much self-knowledge in Brando's political pronouncements or schemes for world salvation, his acting at its best is as precise and analytical as anyone could want: never more so than in *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, where he worms his way into the figure of the oppressed commander, the army officer who embodies outwardly that "certain kind of overt masculinity" that he has signaled as his cue for revenge.

One can only guess how much it owes to Brando's unhappy experience at military school: "I wanted to destroy the place. I hated authority and did everything I could to defeat it by resisting it, subverting it, tricking it and outmaneuvering it." In the character of the major, obsessed with leadership and destroyed by desire, he achieves his surest defeat of authority by the curious tactic of identifying with it. It is a performance not only mesmerizing but mesmerized. Brando seems to subside into the part, finding his truest role in the guise of a haunted automaton: from the episode in which he stands silently in front of a mirror practicing his full range of facial expressions (including, devastatingly, the grin) to the lecture room sequence in which, while droning on about Patton and the nature of leadership, he sinks gradually into bemusement, eyes closed, rubbing his chin with his clasped hands, smiling obliviously and madly to himself.

The man of power withdrawing into himself: nothing could fit his talents better. If Manso's biography is, as its publisher claims, "an epic American saga," it's a saga with little sense of place and only one character, culminating with Brando on his private atoll. What better metaphor for the solitude within which he has secured himself, a solitude broken by middle-of-the-night, pseudonymous conversations with fellow ham radio enthusiasts around the world?

His singularity as an actor finally made him an actor who seems always out of place, separated from the rest of the cast in the same way that the central masked figure in Noh drama is set apart from

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the other performers. If he did not quite invent a new ritual, he managed to alter the way the old ritual is performed. His own stubborn refusal to recognize the rite as anything but an easy way to make a buck, a ticket for sex, food and real estate, is somehow appropriate for such a wild talent.

The "element of wild, irrational violence" that Bertolucci discerned in Brando, and managed to bring into the open in *Last Tango in Paris*, is balanced by the caginess that afterward decided that "I wasn't ever going to destroy myself emotionally to make a movie." Indeed, *Last Tango* is not so much a fiction film starring Brando as a documentary about Brando padded out with some singularly unconvincing tableaux by other actors. Whatever Brando is doing in the movie, it would be hard to call it acting, and his having felt "depleted and exhausted" after the filming is entirely understandable. Watching it now, there is a sense that he has been lured into the open, in his most vulnerable aspect: invited to make a display of his power, so successfully that that power shores up the whole movie. He is at once the secret author of *Last Tango in Paris* and its prisoner.

Sighted on "Larry King Live," dutifully fulfilling (as he was careful to explain) his contractual obligation to promote the book, and still managing to get in a fair share of psychic fencing with his interviewer, Brando made a perfect portrait of a sacred monster at leisure, androgynous and ambivalent, a plump-bellied sage dispensing a sort of indolent cruelty along with copies of *Zen in the Art of Archery*, a Dionysus who leads the orgies but doesn't act as if he's having much fun.

In iconic terms—and if anything is sincere about Brando, his contempt for being an icon seems to be—he had the misfortune to survive, as Montgomery Clift and James Dean and Marilyn Monroe did not. To the indelible frozen moments of *Streetcar* and *The Wild One* must be added all the indignities of his latter years, right up to the sight of him valiantly harmonizing on "Got a Date With an Angel" with Larry King. Because Brando survived, he doesn't get to be eulogized in song, like Clift by The Clash, James Dean by The Beach Boys or Marilyn Monroe by Elton John. (We will have to settle for the evocative old Shorty Rogers side "Blues for Brando.")

Being a survivor is also what gives him his somewhat bloated charm. He will not commit suicide, he will not surrender to self-erasure, but will on the contrary use every wile, every disguise, every confidence trick to stay ahead of the dissolution that he wasn't really courting all those years. His story is finally too much about life in all its scrounging tenacity to suit the taste for self-immolating rebels. Give him the benefit of the final word: "There isn't any end to this story.... I continue to be an enigma to myself in a world that still bewilders me." To the last it will have been his peculiar mission to hold certainty and safety at bay, to persist uneasily in a hungry bewilderment.

GEOFFREY O'BRIEN is a poet and critic whose most recent book is *The Phantom Empire* (W. W. Norton).

The Forgotten Formalist

BY JEFFREY ROSEN

Hugo Black: A Biography by Roger K. Newman

(Pantheon, 741 pp., $30)

On February 17, 1960, at New York University, Justice Hugo Black defended his judicial philosophy against the sneers of Felix Frankfurter and Learned Hand. "Some people regard the prohibitions of the Constitution ... as mere admonitions which Congress need not always observe," said Black in backhanded response to Hand's lectures at Harvard two years earlier. This approach, which "comes close to the English doctrine of legislative omnipotence," Black could not accept. "It is my belief that there *are* 'absolutes' in our Bill of Rights, and that they were put there on purpose by men who knew what words meant, and meant their prohibitions to be 'absolute.' "

Black went on to ridicule a "wholly imaginary judicial opinion of Judge X"—he wrote it as a parody of Frankfurter's lucubrations—that balanced away the Constitution by weighing the interests of the government against the rights of individuals. In the name of restraint, Black said, the balancing approach aggrandizes judges, converting "a government of limited powers to a government in which Congress may do anything that Courts believe to be reasonable." Instead, Black urged a rigidly formal theory of interpretation that forbade the judges from making prudential or political or moral judgments and required them instead to enforce rights derived from the text and history of the Constitution, regardless of the consequences.

Black, in other words, was a liberal strict constructionist, and so he seems an especially useful model for liberals today. He represents Robert Bork and Antonin Scalia's worst nightmare, for his opinions demonstrate that judges who take constitutional text and history seriously should reach liberal results as often as conservative ones. In three areas in particular, Black's liberal legacy is truly heroic: his role in legitimating the New Deal by weaning the Court from the doctrine of substantive due process; his brave First Amendment dissents in the McCarthy era; and, most important of all, his intellectual leadership in applying the Bill of Rights against the states and, in the process, reforming state criminal justice systems, many of which were primitive and racist. In all three areas, Black's real reverence for the language of the Constitution enabled him to frame his arguments with the genius of simplicity, although it's arguable that the harmony between his agenda and the text was a lucky coincidence as much as anything else. At the same time, Black understood the dangers of judicial heroics, and he was just as passionate about refusing to enforce rights that he thought weren't in the Constitution—he dissented, for example, in the *Griswold* contraceptives case—as he was in enforcing the rights that he thought were clearly enumerated.

What is peculiar about Black's legacy is that liberals have lost interest in it. On the new, post-ideological Supreme Court, the moderates—Stephen Breyer, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and David Souter—are apostles of prudence and practicality, of Felix Frankfurter and John Harlan; while the heirs of Black are the marginalized conservatives, Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas, who have narrowed Black's expansive respect for text and history into the partisan burlesque of "original understanding." In the academy, Black has long been dismissed as eloquent but simplistic ("He is said to write his opinions for the intelligent layman," sniffed Thomas Reed Powell in the mid-'40s). And the most excit-

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ing legal scholarship in the '90s—from neo-pragmatism and law and economics to critical race and gender theory—scorns Black's sturdy formalism as self-deluded, deceitful and just as arbitrary and result-oriented in its choice of formal categories as the approaches of his less categorical opponents.

Is this the time for a Black revival? Or is what Black called his "constitutional faith"—that "language and history ... not reasonableness and desirability" are the only legitimate considerations in constitutional interpretation—too simplistic to bear close scrutiny? The publication of the first comprehensive biography of Black seems like a good occasion to ask these questions. After a decade of research, and interviews with more than a thousand of Black's associates, Roger K. Newman has produced an engaging and detailed, if somewhat breathy, portrait. ("Black and books, books and Black—they went together like Black and tennis," he says at one point.) It is especially useful in the early chapters, which fill in the familiar outlines of Black's early career with vivid anecdotes.

But because Newman's focus is biographical and anecdotal, rather than jurisprudential and analytical, his book does not attempt to cast new light on Black's judicial philosophy, or on Black's success in applying it. For a full understanding of Black's ideas, it's helpful to begin with shorter interpretive studies—especially Tinsley Yarborough's excellent defense, *Mr. Justice Black and His Critics* (1988), and James Magee's subtle attack, *Mr. Justice Black: Absolutist on the Court* (1971). Read in conjunction with Black's own writings, all three books suggest that Black was fooling himself when he claimed that his methodology eliminated judicial discretion or thwarted his own preferences in a systematic way. Still, for all its contradictions and inconsistencies, Black's approach remains easier to reconcile with popular sovereignty and democracy than the theories of his rivals.

In a sense, a full-scale biography is the least efficient way of understanding Black, who was far more concerned, as G. Edward White has noted, with preserving his theory of adjudication than with the results it produced. But given the complicated relationship between Black's life and his jurisprudence, one expects a biographer to tease out the contradictions and tensions. In several areas, Black managed radically to separate his positions as a politician from his positions as a justice: his membership in the Ku Klux Klan, and his race-baiting as a defense lawyer, for example, are hard to reconcile with his brave opinions during his first years on the Court insisting on equal rights for blacks.

Newman is not very interested, though, in exploring the relationship between biography and judicial philosophy. Instead, he manages to evoke some of Black's maniacal self-improvement, and the homespun erudition that he combined with a populist suspicion of eggheads and plutocrats. He was christened Fayette Hugo: the surname was chosen by his oldest sister, who had been reading Victor Hugo when he was born. His father Faet Black, the richest supply merchant in Clay County, Alabama, was an alcoholic and usurer who advanced seed, fertilizer and equipment to local farmers at interest rates of up to 75 percent. Tightly wound, soft-spoken and iron-willed from childhood, he dropped out of high school at 15, went straight to the University of Alabama Law School, and spent the rest of his life relentlessly filling the gaps in his formal education. (He boasted, for example, of vanquishing one of his Senate opponents by quoting a passage of the "Fallacies of the Anti-Reformers," from Volume 27 of the Harvard Classics.) Guided by an article by Will Durant called "One Hundred Best Books," he buried himself in the Greeks and Shakespeare; and he became such a partisan of Jefferson that the mere mention of Hamilton's name was enough to provoke him to fits of oratory. Later he would tell his clerks that Edith Hamilton's *The Greek Way* was "the best preparation for the job I could think of."

Newman's most important contribution is assembling the evidence of Black's racial attitudes, and his involvement with the Klan, into a single, fair-minded narrative. His account suggests that Black's views were enlightened by the standards of Clay County, Alabama, in 1920, but far cruder than those he championed on the Court. Appointed at 25 to be a judge on the Alabama police court, Black dispensed mercy to petty burglars with a flamboyance that suggested Henry Fielding's performances as a justice of the peace. After becoming a local celebrity, he ran successfully for county prosecutor; and he distinguished himself by lobbying to improve prison conditions for blacks and whites, and publishing a report on coerced confessions. Then he became a personal injury lawyer, where his exhaustive preparation and instinctive sympathy with the jurors made him a very rich man.

After deliberating for almost a year, Black decided to join the Klan in 1923. But his standard explanation—"I went to a couple of meetings and spoke about liberty"—was false. In fact, during his first race for the Senate, Black marched in parades and spoke at nearly 150 meetings, dressed in full Klan regalia. ("I arranged for Hugo to go to Kalverns across the state, making talks on Catholicism," his campaign manager recalled. "Hugo could make the best anti-Catholic speech you ever heard.") Awarded a Klan "grand passport" after winning the Democratic primary in 1926, Black accepted it enthusiastically. "I know that without the support of the members of this organization," Black observed, "I would not have been called, even by my enemies, 'the junior Senator from Alabama.' " The daughter of one of Black's first mentors recalled that when she ran into a closet as a little girl, a white Klan uniform embroidered with Black's name fell on her head. "Oh, that's Mr. Black's costume," said her mother. "He's going to wear it in a play Saturday night."

Years later, when a clerk asked him why he joined, Black replied simply: "Why son, if you wanted to be elected to the Senate in Alabama in the 1920s, you'd join the Klan, too." But Black relied on the Klan not merely to get elected to the Senate—the Klan controlled about 50,000 votes in Alabama—but also to win verdicts from sympathetic jurors. In his most unsettling performance, Black defended a Protestant minister who had murdered a Catholic priest after the priest performed the marriage of the minister's daughter to a Puerto Rican laborer. "You are a Catholic, aren't you?" Black asked each of the prosecution witnesses. He had a battery of floodlights installed in the courtroom, and he theatrically trained them on the swarthy Puerto Rican bridegroom at the climax of his testimony. "That will do. I just wanted the jury to see that man," said Black. And during his closing argument to the jury, most of whom were Klansmen, Black recited the official Ku Klux Klan prayer: "Our Father and Our God. We, as klansmen, acknowledge our dependence upon Thee...." The jury, obligingly, ignored the evidence and voted to acquit.

In the Senate, Black cultivated his political base: he became hysterical, one reporter noted, during a debate about a federal assistance plan that would have fed blacks as well as whites. He also made his national reputation as an ardent New Dealer: when he proposed to create six million new jobs by legislating a thirty-hour national work week, even FDR privately questioned the constitutionality of the plan. As a reward for Black's loyal support during the Court packing battle, Roosevelt appointed him to the Court in 1937. The appointment was exquisitely spiteful revenge on the

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Senate and the Court, even by FDR's standards. "To give the rebels' part of the country so important an appointment," wrote Joseph Alsop and Turner Catledge, "yet give it to one of the two or three left-wingers in the Senate was a neat and cruel irony to the rather vengeful President."

As a justice, Black's success in setting aside the racial prejudices that he had flirted with in the Senate is an impressive display of the triumph of methodological discipline over political opportunism. When Newman attempts to draw connections between biography and jurisprudence, however, the insights are sometimes superficial. "Black barely peeped when invasions against Fourth Amendment rights were charged," writes Newman. "Much of the reason derives from his experience working closely with police officers while he was a prosecutor in Birmingham." This is a little glib. The most obvious reason for Black's narrow construction of the Fourth Amendment had nothing to do with biography; it flowed from his textualist judicial philosophy. Unlike the First Amendment, whose commands appear, as Black said, to be absolute, the Fourth Amendment prohibition is far more subjective ("The right of the people to be secure ... against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated"). Black felt he was being faithful to text and history when he made the reasonableness of a search the touchstone of its constitutionality. And when Alexander Bickel and others criticized Black for begging all the hard questions in constitutional interpretation, they misunderstood the nature of Black's absolutism, which was not a method that purported to define the scope of constitutional rights, but a standard for enforcing those rights, after their meaning has been derived.

It is on the derivation question, of course, that Black remains very vulnerable. The claim that text alone gives clear answers to controversial questions is a pretense; and Black never explained very clearly *how* judges should fill in the blanks when text and history are murky. In his NYU lecture, for example, Black said unhelpfully that there would be differences in opinion about what counts as an unreasonable search, but "if it *is* unreasonable, it is absolutely prohibited." He was also fond of underlining "I read 'no law abridging' to mean '*no law abridging*' "—another example of his tendency to substitute italics for argument.

In addition to failing to specify how rights should be derived from text and history, Black never explained very convincingly why text and history were

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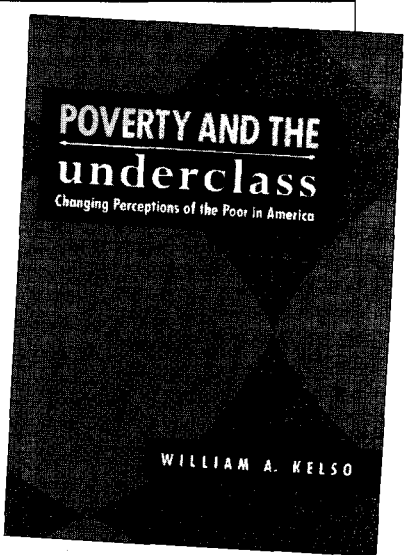

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important in the first place. In his Charpentier lecture, delivered at Columbia in 1967, Black said that his reading of the historical events surrounding the ratification of the Constitution convinced him that the federal government is one of limited powers, and that no department of government—executive, legislative or juridical—has authority to add to or subtract from the powers granted or denied by the Constitution. Judges must enforce the textual limits of the Bill of Rights, he said, to preserve "our *written* constitution" (those italics again), and to prevent the federal government from extending its powers into the realm of liberties marked off in the Bill of Rights.

This sounds fine, as far as it goes; but Black's ode to limited government is hard to reconcile with his own role in presiding over the expansion of the administrative state. Black never seriously grappled with the ways in which the New Deal subverted the eighteenth-century notion of precisely limited federal powers. (In supporting FDR's court-packing plan, Black argued that the Commerce clause gave Congress the authority to pass any laws that directly or indirectly affected the national economy; during thirty-four years on the Court, he never voted to strike down any federal law for violating the Commerce clause.) The overconfidence of his set pieces about limited federal power gives a simpleminded quality to several of his opinions, such as the Steel Seizure case in 1952, in which he declared that President Truman had no authority to seize control of steel production during the cold war because "the Founders of this Nation entrusted the lawmaking power to Congress alone in both good and bad times." Applied literally, Black's mechanical notion that the Constitution grants all lawmaking authority to Congress, and none to the executive, could invalidate the modern administrative state, which Black himself had helped to construct as a senator and to legitimize as a Justice.

Black also never explained how his notion of the Bill of Rights as a guarantee of limited federal powers could be turned against the state governments, whose powers are general rather than precisely enumerated. For example, Black often said that the absolutist language of the First Amendment—"Congress shall make no law"—reflected a widespread understanding in 1789 that Congress lacked enumerated power to suppress speech. But he skirted over the fact that state governments in 1789 were free to suppress speech in whatever ways they pleased. The federalism argument clashes, therefore, with Black's most important legacy: his claim that the privileges and immunities clause of the Fourteenth Amendment incorporated the restrictions of the First Amendment, and the rest of the Bill of Rights, against the states. If the purpose of the First Amendment was purely jurisdictional, rather than libertarian, it's hard to see how it can logically bind the states at all.

Sketched broadly in the Charpentier lecture is a more satisfying theory, rooted in what Black called "popular government by the people themselves." Principles of democracy and popular sovereignty required, Black believed, that political decisions should be confined to the political branches, and that judges should enforce the will of the people, represented by the text and history of the Constitution, rather than being guided by extra-constitutional considerations, such as prudence or morality. "Adherence to the Constitution as written does not mean we are controlled by the dead," Black said. "It means we are controlled by the Constitution, truly a living document," because the people have the power to *amend* the Constitution whenever they no longer agree with the principles enshrined by past generations. Expressed at this level of abstraction, Black's neo-Hamiltonian theory seems coherent; and none of the most prominent rival theories—pragmatism, legal realism, or common law constitutionalism—has adequately answered Black's charge that it's hard to reconcile a broad prudential or pragmatic role for judges with the American tradition of popular sovereignty and a written constitution.

There's a heady radicalism to Black's approach: every decision is a return to first principles, and every precedent is always up for grabs. Within the areas that he thought judges competent to decide, Black was not squeamish about overruling landmark cases, or uprooting decades of traditions and practice, because he thought that tradition and precedent had to be subordinated to the text of the Constitution itself. (During Black's thirty-four years on the Court, he dissented more often, and argued that more decisions should be overruled, than any other justice.) Black considered himself, therefore, a judicial activist in his willingness to enforce textually enumerated rights, and a champion of judicial restraint in his refusal to enforce rights that were not textually enumerated.

But Black never reflected very deeply about the mantra of text, history and structure: he never explained when it was appropriate to consider textual arguments, as opposed to historical or structural ones, and how the three tools of interpretation relate to each other. Sometimes he resorted to purely structural arguments—claiming that particular principles or results were implicit in the structure of government and the institutional relationships created by the Constitution. In his partial dissent from the Court's decision upholding the Voting Rights Act in 1965, for example, Black complained that Section 5 of the act, which requires local governments to ask permission of U.S. district courts before adopting new election laws, conflicted with structural principles of federalism, rather than with specific constitutional language.

In other areas, such as free speech, Black was primarily a textualist, interpreting the words of the Constitution without resorting to extrinsic evidence of their historical meaning. When interpreting the religion clauses of the First Amendment, by contrast, Black rushed past the absolute prohibitions of the text and relied on historical arguments about the intentions of the people who framed and ratified the Constitution. Although the language of the First Amendment forbids all laws "prohibiting the free

Think-Piece

Think war. Under that awful heat,
the beach it took a week to take,
a fire-fight beside a bridge,
long valleys shelled until the shells
ran out. The news from Heartbreak Ridge
was that War Is, and isn't, Hell—
until the H-Bomb test would make
it ... unthinkable? obsolete?
Still young, one thought it would be like
Hiroshima (a sudden strike,
the blasted dead), but multiplied.
By chance no one I'd known had died

in either war. The neutron bomb
is easier to think about:
though everyone has died away,
houses still stand on darkened farms,
while something new and weightless weighs
upon the unpicked fruit, a charm
that promises the end of drought
and death. The trees and field are calm.
Idly they wonder, now and then,
why tractors molt in place, and when
they'll know the rooting smell of death
for what it is, the air they breathe.

DAVID SOFIELD

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exercise" of religion, for example, Black concluded that the Framers of the amendment intended to protect only "religious speech and beliefs, rather than religious practice or conduct."

Applied in a vacuum, textual arguments that are divorced from history, or historical arguments divorced from text, make little sense. There are plausible theories of judicial review that question the value of history entirely; but it's hard to see the rationale for exalting the text of the Constitution without considering the circumstances that created it. As David Strauss argues, unless constitutional interpretation is to be reduced to verbal fetishism, judges have to make some effort to attempt to reconcile textual, historical and structural considerations—to begin with the text, identify a historical principle that the ratifiers of the textual provision intended to protect, and then translate that principle from the eighteenth or nineteenth century into the modern world.

Black's most impressive decisions showed a creative sensitivity to the importance of interpretative translation. Unlike Bork and Scalia, he recognized the importance of reasoning by analogy, rather than mechanically binding himself to an eighteenth-century worldview. As Charles Reich argued in his 1966 essay, "Mr. Justice Black and the Living Constitution," Black often asked what a given provision of the Bill of Rights was designed to accomplish—what evils it was intended to prevent—and then tried to translate the historical provision by applying it in a very different place and time. During the McCarthy era, for example, Black argued that Congress's attempts to punish individual members of subversive organizations were the modern equivalents of bills of attainder. He also suggested that espionage prosecutions were the modern equivalent of prosecuting treason, and should therefore proceed under the constitutional requirement for treason trials. Black himself became indignant, of course, when Reich suggested that he believed in a "Living Constitution" updated by judges, and until the end of his life he denied the need for translating the Framers' values at all. But the conceit that it's possible to commune directly with the Framers is Black's problem, not ours. His best decisions are models of translation; and they show that it's possible to be respectful of text and history while identifying constitutional principles at intermediate levels of abstraction that avoid the radicalisms of Robert Bork and Ronald Dworkin.

Like Bork, however, Black was often arbitrary in his decisions about when to engage in interpretive translation and when to stop his inquiry in the eighteenth century. Reasoning by analogy, for example, Black believed that a police-compelled stomach pump should be considered a "search" within the meaning of the Fourth Amendment. But he consistently dissented from efforts to extend the Fourth Amendment to regulate wiretapping. Conversations cannot be "seized" within the ordinary meaning of language, he argued, and the Framers were aware of eavesdropping, but didn't believe that the Fourth Amendment prohibited it. The jarring gap between the levels of abstraction in the two decisions shows that Black's methodology hardly eliminated judicial discretion and subjectivity, despite his claims to the contrary.

The fact that Black's formalism often led him to results that seem arbitrary, erratic, perverse and unpredictable strikes me, in the end, as a point in his favor. The weirder the results, the more dramatic the proof that Black was controlled by law rather than policy. The more troubling charge is that Black sometimes adjusted his methodology, or slanted his history, to guarantee the results he preferred. For example, Black's treatment of history in First Amendment cases is especially problematic. Put starkly, it's very hard to reconcile his First Amendment absolutism—which would have granted absolute constitutional protection to obscenity, libel and slander—with even the most liberal conception of free expression in the late eighteenth century.

Black never delved very deeply into eighteenth-century history; but he was distraught after reading Leonard Levy's *Legacy of Suppression*, which argued that the Framers of the First Amendment intended nothing more than Blackstone's cramped notion of free speech: freedom from restraint before publication, but no freedom from punishment after publication, including punishment for seditious libel. Levy's book, Black told a friend, "strikes one of the most devastating blows ever directed against civil liberties in America." Black was willing to admit that some Framers—especially the vile Hamilton—didn't think the First Amendment abolished seditious libel; but he thought it was crucial that no Framer said *explicitly* that seditious libel wasn't abolished by the First Amendment.

The only way that Black could reconcile full protection for obscenity and libel with the eighteenth- or nineteenth-century understanding of the First Amendment was to define the Framers' intentions at an intermediate level of

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generality, rather than pretending to discover concrete judgments that weren't there. "The basic premise of the First Amendment is that all present instruments of communication, as well as others that inventive genius may bring into being, shall be free from governmental censorship or prohibition," Black said in a dissent in 1949. This is broad enough to cover dirty movies, but it required Black to adopt a series of broad limiting principles. He joined a 1942 decision exempting commercial speech from the protection of the First Amendment, arguing that commercial speech is part of a broader course of conduct "carried out by means of language"—the attempted sale of a product or service.

Black also excluded "symbolic speech" from the full protections of the First Amendment. He dissented from the *Tinker* case in 1969 on the grounds that the wearing of armbands to protest the Vietnam War was a form of conduct rather than speech. He also insisted that nothing in the Federal Constitution "bars a State from making the deliberate burning of the American flag an offense." He took an equally cramped view of political protest during the civil rights and Vietnam eras; and he emasculated the First Amendment right to freedom of assembly by holding that protesters could not demonstrate on public property without the government's consent. The arbitrariness of Black's judgments—communicating ideas by means of flags and emblems is "conduct"; having sex on camera is "speech"—suggests that Black's choice of formal categories may not have been completely divorced from his personal convictions.

When the full record of his jurisprudence is evaluated dispassionately, it is clear that Black was vulnerable to the familiar pitfalls of formalism: his choice of categories was sometimes arbitrary and subjective; he often switched indiscriminately from textual arguments to historical ones without justifying his choices in a very systematic way; and he periodically succumbed to the temptation of prudence. As Black himself told a law clerk in a moment of rare candor: "A wise judge chooses, among plausible constitutional philosophies, one that will generally allow him to reach results he can believe in.... A judge who does not decide some cases ... differently from the way he would wish, because the philosophy he has adopted requires it, is not a judge. But a judge who refuses ever to stray from his judicial philosophy ... no matter how important the issue involved, is a fool."

And yet Black's inconsistencies are overshadowed by the nobility of his vision and his achievements. By insisting that judges should enforce all the provisions of the Constitution without deciding whether they are wise or prudent, Black led the Court out of the wilderness of legal realism and answered the charge that all law is politics. For liberals who have allowed conservatives to coopt his legacy, now is a good time to reclaim it. •

A Gathering of Dissidents

BY ANNE APPLEBAUM

Exit Into History by Eva Hoffman

(Penguin, 410 pp., $11.95 paper)

About halfway through her journey across the six nations of Central Europe, Eva Hoffman has an odd experience. She is in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, and she is sitting in a wine bar, drinking the potent white wine for which the Slovaks are justly famous. Jozef, her companion, is an intellectual, a man who translates books of philosophy into Slovak. He tells her that he doesn't mind that his own works, also composed in Slovak, are not read: "It doesn't matter whether the world pays attention," he says. "Each culture is a self-contained organism. It has all the elements it needs."

She finds this vision of sufficiency and self-containment "cheering," and begins to warm to the man. But then the talk turns to the brief period of Slovak independence, from 1939 to 1945. During that time Slovakia was a de facto Nazi puppet state and Father Tiso, the leader of independent Slovakia, was a de facto Nazi puppet. Still, he was perceived by the Slovaks as authentic. As elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe, Hitler played upon thwarted national ambitions for his own ends; he gave some nations, Slovakia among them, their first experience of sovereignty. That this required certain compromises seemed to many at the time less important than the fact of nationhood itself. But to Hoffman, who correctly remembers the anti-Semitic atrocities of the Tiso regime, it hardly seems believable that anyone could still defend it.

Casually, she asks Jozef about Slovak nationalism. "Fully expecting a good, progressive answer," she is stunned when he begins to defend Tiso, and experiences "something like a suspension of belief." Her preconceived images don't seem to work: here is Jozef, described as "nice" and "genial," an intellectual like herself, a former dissident, a man who has "nothing of a fanatic about him," professing a belief in something she holds to be evil. A small gulf opens up, she writes: until now she has been traveling in Poland, the familiar, much-loved country of her childhood, and in the Czech lands, also well known to her through writers such as Milan Kundera and the comfortably Western figure of Vaclav Havel. Here in Slovakia, she has encountered what seems to be a different kind of nationalism, a "burning, nineteenth-century kind of nationalism, which overcomes other scruples because it involves basic questions of selfhood," and she is shocked.

This moment of discomfort is one of the most interesting in Hoffman's book, because it illustrates a larger problem that most Western travelers in Central Europe—and by this I mean mainly Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia—now face. Good dissidents, bad nationalists, nice intellectuals, evil Communists: our stereotypes of Central Europeans are very strong. Perhaps this is because the Central Europeans under communism had to make choices that we in the West never had to face—difficult, ethical choices, with no prizes awarded for being morally correct—while at the same time they maintained a culture and a way of life that we recognized as similar to our own. One made exceptions for the Balkans, and one assumed that Russian culture was somehow alien to our own, but the Central Europeans were both heroic and demonic in ways that we in Western Europe or America could easily imagine. But could we really? Now that we are able to come closer to Central Europe, to travel there freely, to talk to people without the complications of censorship and fear, we are also finding that the categories into which we have placed people from the "other" Europe for the past forty years are no longer

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valid. In some cases, we may be discovering that they were never valid at all.

Hoffman's book is an excellent case study of this confrontation between the Central Europe that Westerners expect to discover, and Central Europe, the place itself. The book tells the story of a journey (actually two journeys: Hoffman went in 1990 and again in 1991) from Warsaw to Sofia, via Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria: the nations of Central Europe plus the two stable Balkan states. Avoiding the descriptions of bad food and restless natives that characterize the Etonian-on-a-bicycle style of travel writing as applied to Eastern Europe, Hoffman goes out of her way to meet whomever she can. She asks serious questions—about economics, about politics, about the moral changes taking place—almost endlessly.

Because it is the story of a personal journey, *Exit Into History* cannot help but reflect and explore the preconceptions of its author. Born in Poland, Hoffman moved to Canada as a child. Later, as a teenager, she made a definite decision to cease being a Pole and to become American instead; that earlier journey was beautifully described in *Lost in Translation*, Hoffman's classic tale of immigration and adjustment in America. Her background gives Hoffman the empathy, the curiosity and the language to speak at length to Central Europeans (with Polish and Russian she gets by, and needs translators only in Hungary and Romania) yet she perceives herself as an American, openly asks what she calls American questions and brings American assumptions, sometimes intentionally, sometimes unconsciously, to her task.

In her introduction Hoffman establishes herself as an outsider by reminding us that Eastern Europe was, for Westerners, always the exotic "other": "When Shakespeare wanted to indicate a fabulous never-never land, he called it Illyria" (Illyria being, of course, a perfectly acceptable name for Bulgaria). But it is Hoffman's assumptions about the people whom she meets that mark her most clearly as an outsider. It is impossible not to note, for example, that the words "good," "progressive," "dissident" and "liberal" often come up together. In Hungary, she notes that a conservative party has won the elections, "after the progressive dissidents have had their brief shining moment," and in Poland it is the "progressives" who think pluralism is the road to Europe, while the "nationalists" believe in ethnic homogeneity.

Assigning such terms of praise and blame ought to be a difficult task. There were many kinds of dissidents in Central Europe before 1989, and it is not always easy to establish which ones were progressive then and which ones are progressive now. Nor is it so clear who is a liberal and who is a nationalist, and what those appellations mean in a given context. But there is in Central Europe a prototype dissident, a category of dissident-as-recognized-by-*The New York Review of Books*: this is the sort of dissident that we Westerners always heard about and read about in the past, and this is who Hoffman seems to mean when she talks about "progressives."

Prototype dissidents were always intellectuals, inevitably involved in the publishing of underground books, and invariably speakers of English or French. Having reached university in the 1960s, after the death of Stalin and before the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, they lived their formative years during a period of relative openness within the Warsaw Pact and thrived in those countries that remained relatively open. Most, therefore, were Hungarians or Poles, although a tiny number were Czechs. Adam Michnik and Gyorgy Konrad, two of what Hoffman calls Central Europe's Great White Gods, make appearances, but Hoffman speaks at length with many such people, including Helena Luczywo, the managing editor of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, a post-dissident Polish newspaper, and Miklos Haraszti, the ex-Maoist who is now a prominent Hungarian parliamentarian, as well as a whole host of filmmakers, magazine editors and Czechs who work in publishing.

It is true that such people are among the most articulate in post-communist Europe; but it is equally true that this type of dissident enjoyed an exaggerated prestige before 1989. This is because most belonged to the moderate, left-leaning wing of the opposition. Indeed, most were also born into Communist families, as Hoffman realizes in Poland: "As I talk to my dissident friends, I discover an interesting twist ... it turns out that many of them are their [the communists'] children." As such, they were less liable to be persecuted, and often found it easier to talk to foreigners, and easier to go abroad. Western journalists (myself included) knew many of them before 1989. We relied on them for information about the activities of the underground—and made many of them more famous abroad than at home.

Since the fall of communism, this particular type of dissident has proved (with a few exceptions) to be phenomenally bad at democratic politics. Perhaps it was because they came of age, as Hoff-

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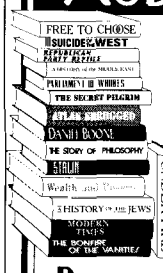

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man puts it, in an "era of grand moral drama" and then suddenly found themselves in "the era of issues," expected to make decisions about budgets, factories, unemployment and banks. Perhaps it was because they led lives isolated from those of their compatriots. Luczywo tells Hoffman that when people accuse intellectuals of not understanding the real conditions of Polish life, "frankly, I don't know what they're talking about." Hoffman agrees. But someone like Luczywo *was* privileged: as the daughter of a prominent Stalinist, she would have (ironically) grown up much wealthier, much better connected and much better read and traveled than others. Her failure to see this is itself revealing.

Not recognizing their isolation, they made mistakes. When Poles voted the "wrong" way in the 1990 presidential elections, Bronislaw Geremek, another leading former dissident, went on T.V. to accuse the Polish people of immaturity, whereupon his party's popularity dropped even further. Pursuing democratic politics much in the way they pursued dissident politics, they also squabbled, divided into tiny factions and printed libelous stories about one another. Politicians with roots in the old opposition won the decided majority of votes in the most recent Polish elections; because these were divided into a dozen parties, however, half of which were too small to win the 5 percent of votes necessary to enter parliament, politicians with roots in the old Communist Party ended up with a majority of parliamentary seats.

The most successful non-Communist politicians in Central Europe have been those who abandoned the idea that they, as dissidents and intellectuals, had a historical right to be in power. Vaclav Klaus, prime minister of the Czech Republic, understood the need to create a professional, free-market political party, specifically designed to win elections. If Hoffman is occasionally guilty of beatifying the dissident intellectuals so beloved of outsiders in the past, she also acknowledges that this new type of politician is the politician of the future. Meeting Zsolt Nemeth, a leader of FIDESZ, Hungary's self-consciously youthful liberal party, Hoffman is impressed by the absence of Marxism, reformed or otherwise, in his thinking: "We were fed up with it, honestly," he tells her. Nemeth also accepts the way in which power has broken up some of his friendships: "We understand it as a part of the political process," he says, speaking in a way, Hoffman notes, that a former dissident like Miklos Haraszti never would.

There were also, of course, other people who opposed the Communist regime in Central Europe. But instead of coming from Communist families, they came, perhaps, from the wartime partisan movements in Poland, or were even the children of Tiso supporters in Slovakia. Less likely to speak English or French, more deeply attached to prewar traditions, they rejected communism absolutely, never attempted to reform it, and therefore were noticeably absent from the postwar intellectual circles that enjoyed more freedom to debate and to publish abroad. In certain countries, their existence was well known. One of the reasons that Polish Communists agreed to hand over power in 1989 was their fear that the next generation of dissidents would be far more fiercely anti-Communist, and therefore much harder to contain and to manipulate, than the generation that came of age in 1968.

In other countries, the strength of their popular support came as a surprise. This was most notable in places where the actual survival of the nation had been threatened by historical circumstance or Soviet occupation: in Slovakia, as well as the Baltic states and Ukraine (which Hoffman does not get to). How to judge movements led by such people is one of the trickiest questions facing a Western traveler to Central and Eastern Europe. Easily dismissed as "nationalists," and therefore neither progressive nor liberal, there is nevertheless more to them than meets the average Western eye.

Undoubtedly, by maintaining a tone of high disapproval when faced with Central European nationalists, Westerners can, at times, miss the point. It is curious to remember now, but nationalism was once progressive and liberal, a part of the definition of progressivism and liberalism. The nation, the national will, the national spirit: those were the causes of the French revolutionaries in 1789 and the Hungarian revolutionaries in 1848, of Mazzini and Masaryk, of romantic poets and youth movements such as Young Italy and Young Poland. In the nineteenth century, nationalism was about linguistic and cultural rebirth, and the opponents of nationalism were the forces of aristocratic reaction—multinational empires such as Austro-Hungary and Russia.

By twisting Central European nationalism into a negative force, aimed at the destruction of other nations, Hitler destroyed the positive connotations of the word "nationalism" almost completely. The war in Yugoslavia has finished that task in our generation. It is the qualities of Hitler's or Milosevic's nationalism for which we look, almost automatically, when we hear of a "nationalist" leader or movement in Central Europe, and it is this kind of nationalism that Hoffman fears might now revive: "Extreme nationalism, anti-Semitism, the gamut of unpleasant social tendencies." But even these undesirable phenomena can be perceived to exist where they do not. Because of what we have read of Central Europe's history, even when nationalism is hardly more than patriotism in this part of the world, it is always feared to herald something worse.

This assumption—that nationalism is inevitably an illiberal, anti-progressive force in Central Europe—is the one that Hoffman starts with, and it is the one that most clearly marks her as an American. Yet it is hard for anyone to deny that the nationalism of the past few years, at least as manifest in Central Europe, often has been of the positive sort. The rediscovery of history has had its comic moments (arguments over whether the Polish eagle on the coat of arms should wear a crown), but the effect it has had on the pride and the motivation of individuals may turn out to be very important; the revival of national literature in Slovakia may seem very obscure, but who knows how many poets may eventually be rescued for world literature.

Distinctions must be made—the magical street demonstrations that brought down the Communist regime in Prague were inspired by nationalism, as were the more desperate battles of the Romanians, as are the Russian army's ambitions in the former Soviet Union and the Serbs' ambitions in Bosnia—and by the end of the book, Hoffman is willing to make them. The blood feud between Hungary and Romania reminds her of nothing so much as the family feud described in *Huckleberry Finn*: an "absurd, violent quarrel whose causes have long been forgotten." On the other hand, she recognizes that the rebirth of Turkish culture in Bulgaria—which also entails a sort of nationalism—has an unusual beauty to it: "modern and premodern, it seems to me—blended in a curious, baffling mix."

Finally, there is another set of stereotypes to be dealt with. If it is true that "good" dissidents have often turned out to be poor democrats, and that "dangerous" nationalists have often helped to bring about cultural revivals in Central Europe, then what should Westerners expect from former Communists, once the very definition of the enemy? The answer as presented in Hoffman's book is: almost anything. Hoffman's encounters with Them, as Poles used to call

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their Communist rulers, are curiously various. In Helena Luczywo's father, Ferdynand Chaber, she finds an unrepentant Stalinist whose "eyes are still—always—on the Cause and some entity like Mankind," despite the fact that Helena suspects her father of having committed "monstrous" acts. In Romania, on the other hand, Hoffman meets a former Stalinist whose "complicity in a terrible history has never ceased to disturb him."

What is largely missing from *Exit Into History*—perhaps because Hoffman visited too early to spot the phenomenon—is the younger, more ordinary sort of Communist, the Communist who never believed, who joined the party for the sake of a career, and who has spent the years since 1989 converting his political power into financial power and inevitably back into political power again. It is a rule, in fact, that wherever former Communists were allowed to remain respectable, wherever there was no clear break with the past, they are now back in control. *Nomenklatura* capitalists, as they are called, now control most of the Polish private sector, as well as the Polish parliament; former Communists, transformed into nationalists, completely dominate public life in Slovakia. Former Communists also now dominate Hungarian political life, in partnership with former dissidents of the traditional type.

Only in the Czech Republic, where Communists were forbidden to run for public office and the files of suspected police informers were opened, have they retreated into the background. Unpleasant as this process may seem to outsiders (and it seems downright cruel to Hoffman), it has proved to be the only way to keep the political process relatively free of the debilitating corruption that the Communist old boys' network inevitably brings with it. Oddly enough, it can be much harder to see the former Communists as they are—as small-minded, unscrupulous men—than it is to perceive them as victims of their own youthful idealism, or as evil men of the highest order.

Good and bad, right and wrong, heroes and demons: by the end of Hoffman's book, the categories that she appears to apply during the first half of the book have dissolved quite a bit. Perhaps this is because she traveled from Poland, the country best known to her, to Bulgaria, Shakespeare's Illyria, a place that lies, she admits, "beyond my preconceptions and prejudices." Perhaps *it is also because* any extended encounter with Central Europe—like any encounter with a place that has existed largely in myth—leads to the dissolution of preconceptions and prejudices altogether.

ANNE APPLEBAUM is deputy editor of *The Spectator* in London. Her book, *Between East and West: Across the Borderlands of Europe*, has recently been published by Pantheon.

TRB *continued from page 6*

exchange for our reciprocal pledge. And whether or not you trust the Russians, their own strategic logic argues increasingly for aiming elsewhere (e.g., at other former Soviet states). Similarly, North Korea's top two targets would be South Korea and Japan. That's the way tensions are in the post-cold war world: regionalized. The surest American defense against "accidental launch" is to stay on good terms with Brazil.

Of course, however slight the chances of nuclear attack, and however real the chances that a missile defense would fail to repel it, a little insurance would be appealing if it were cheap enough. First of all, it isn't cheap ($50 billion assuming meager cost overruns). Moreover, "insurance" conduces to solipsism; if we feel (however falsely) safe inside our little shell, waning support for internationalism will wane even faster.

I'm not saying the new SDI enthusiasm is *driven* by nascent Republican isolationism. But the enthusiasm accommodates and nourishes the party's isolationist strain. In the Republican summary of the Security Restoration Act, only one goal gets more prominent billing than SDI: "to ensure that U.S. troops are only deployed to support missions in the U.S.'s national security interests."

We all care about "national security interests." But some of us think that national security (in various senses) is increasingly tied to global stability. The Republicans' post-election rhetoric, in contrast, fixates on keeping U.S. troops out of peacekeeping roles, keeping U.S. dollars from supporting other peacekeepers and stifling the foreign aid that helps stabilize places like Russia and the Middle East.

Also, of course, the Republicans don't favor one-worldish projects like ... well, like continued adherence to the 1972 ABM Treaty. And violating that treaty (which, alas, even the Clinton administration's battlefield missile-defense research program threatens to do) is itself a dangerous retreat from internationalism. What's scarier than an Indian-Pakistani border flanked by nuclear arsenals? An Indian-Pakistani border flanked by destabilizing ABMs as well. We might yet be able to head that prospect off, but not once we've built our own shell.

The United States is now uniquely positioned to lead the world in avoiding two bad things: a global race to build destabilizing missile defense systems, and a global race to carry destabilizing weapons into space—not just anti-missile weapons, but anti-satellite weapons. The Republicans are now on record as wanting to start the first of these races, and they are clearly inclined to start the second. It's time for President Clinton to crawl out of his bomb shelter, survey the wreckage and start fighting.

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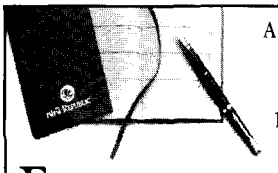

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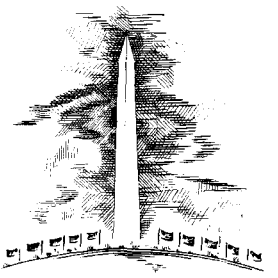
I APPRECIATE THE "CANDY-FREE" checkout line at my local Safeway, but I steer my kids to the line with the sweets because that guarantees us a "journalism-free" checkout experience, which these days I value more. The kids pass the time manhandling M&Ms. That means they don't peer at the *National Enquirer*, and I am spared questions about multiple births to aliens or, when an eye-catching calamity is splashed on the covers of the newsweeklies, about the latest earthly tragedy. This past week, like mothers everywhere, I was particularly eager to avoid a Susan Smith discussion; not least, I hoped my budding reader wouldn't notice *Newsweek*'s helpful tag line on the cover: "PLUS: WHY PARENTS KILL THEIR KIDS."

SO FAR SO GOOD; WE'VE EVEN miraculously avoided trauma from the T.V. news. But just in case (I was prematurely relieved that we had gotten through the Bobbitt business unscathed), I've tried to prepare myself for the awkward moment. For help, I've consulted what has become a routine therapeutic media feature: tips to parents for handling R-rated news. "The wisdom among several childcare experts interviewed this week was that parents should be reassuring if their children bring the subject up," I learned from *The New York Times*'s "Parent and Child" column. In fact, "experts see a window of opportunity opened through this tragedy":

> "It offers a chance for parent-child communications," said Dr. Furman.... "Talk to your child. Let them know that sometimes you can be very naughty and I get very mad. But nothing your child would do would ever lead Mommy to do that."

With soothing talk like that, who needs threats? Kids don't like being scolded, but I doubt many of them ever dreamed it could be a slippery slope from time-outs to Davy Jones's locker. Instead of earnest reassurance when a gruesome incident saturates the media, maybe a dose of honest revulsion isn't the worst thing. "Yuk," I explained when the Bobbitt news finally hit our household during the 6:00 news one evening well after the event. Before I had a chance to be more articulate—to crouch down to make eye-contact and dispel incipient castration anxiety—my son took off. So I just kept on chopping carrots.

I'VE CONSULTED DR. SPOCK'S NEW book, *A Better World for Our Children*, to find out how my behavior would measure up to his standards. He would approve, I think, of my retreat into silent carrot cutting. That's because he's big on root vegetables. (He credits his vigorous late years to his macrobiotic diet.) It's also because he believes that parents are generally better off keeping quiet than offering the misplaced "easy reassurance" to which they are prone. But my M&M strategy would appall him. "When I go to the grocery store and see what is in the shopping carts of people with children, I am in shock," he writes. "I see parents buying sugar for their children at a rate that would sicken or kill many other animals." So much for my efforts to avoid association with the maternal impulse to murder.



DR. SPOCK, IT QUICKLY BECOMES clear, agrees with none other than Newt Gingrich about "serious sickness in society." Spock's subtitle is "Rebuilding American Family Values," and he laments the loss of "spiritual beliefs," the ubiquity of blue jeans ("I used to assume that the blue jeans style would pass and that men and women would once again wear clothes of greater variety and formality when not doing chores") and the corrosion of culture:

> Books and other forms of the printed word were once precious enough to be reserved for serious subjects. Now, anything goes in print. In an era of photography, painters have backed away from traditional scenes and still lifes to concentrate on abstractions, and their human images tend instead toward distortion. Serious music has turned from harmonics to dissonance. Popular music is often shouted or screamed instead of sung, and some of it exhorts its listeners to outright acts of violence or personal degradation. Much contemporary dancing expresses anger and aggression, compared with the mild-mannered, romantic ballroom dancing of yesterday.

And this isn't just a late conversion by Dr. Permissiveness, as the right has long perceived him, condemning *Baby and Child Care* for creating a "Spock-marked" generation of countercultural rebels. Though he joined the radical left when he became politically active in the early '60s, Dr. Spock, as he himself has proudly insisted, has always been a cultural fuddy-duddy. When others turned to tie-dye, he stuck with ties, a refreshingly stodgy sight on the anti-war barricades. And his famous book, which has been through countless editions, has never come close to counseling value-free "instant gratification." But don't expect Gingrich to cite this American icon and his latest pronouncements when he can cite moralizing McGuffey Readers instead. To keep the culture wars stoked, it doesn't help him to invoke a man who ran for president on the People's Party ticket in 1972—even if that man is also worrying about divorce, unruly children, the importance of "character," the evils of television and movies, the neglect of "family religious tradition." That Dr. Spock's call to restore civility is accompanied by a zealous macrobiotic pitch won't help him with the Newtoids. A 91-year-old who eats miso soup for breakfast and "fried mochi served as a pancake with a touch of raspberries" with his "bancha twig tea" won't pass muster with Gingrich as a "normal American."

I SUSPECT NEITHER GINGRICH NOR Spock has paid much attention to another iconic ally in the family values crusade, Disney. Nor did I, until the latest spin-off from *The Lion King* arrived in my office. It's a small square-shaped, gilt-paged "keepsake volume" called *Circle of Life*, devoted to the "thrilling opening song" from the hit movie of the summer. Every page has a gaudy film-related illustration to match Tim Rice's lyrics about finding "our place on the path unwinding, in the circle, the circle of life." Though it has the look of a pioneering piece of New Age kitsch for kids, the jacket copy delivers a more old-fashioned line to parents about "this timeless story of family, responsibility and renewal": "We must all face up to our responsibilities, embrace our heritage and 'remember who we are.'" Leave Spock aside; when a hit movie (all about the importance of fathers) and schlocky tie-in items start to parrot Republican preaching, then it's really time for Gingrich to worry. Such harmonious sermonizing can rob the family values issue of its fighting edge—just the soothing effect intended by this wholesomely pseudo-mystical booklet. In fact, that's what the doctor himself has ordered for our social ills. For the contemporary family in crisis, Spock urges the most un-Gingrichian of remedies: an effort "to cultivate serenity, perhaps with meditation or counseling."

ANN HULBERT

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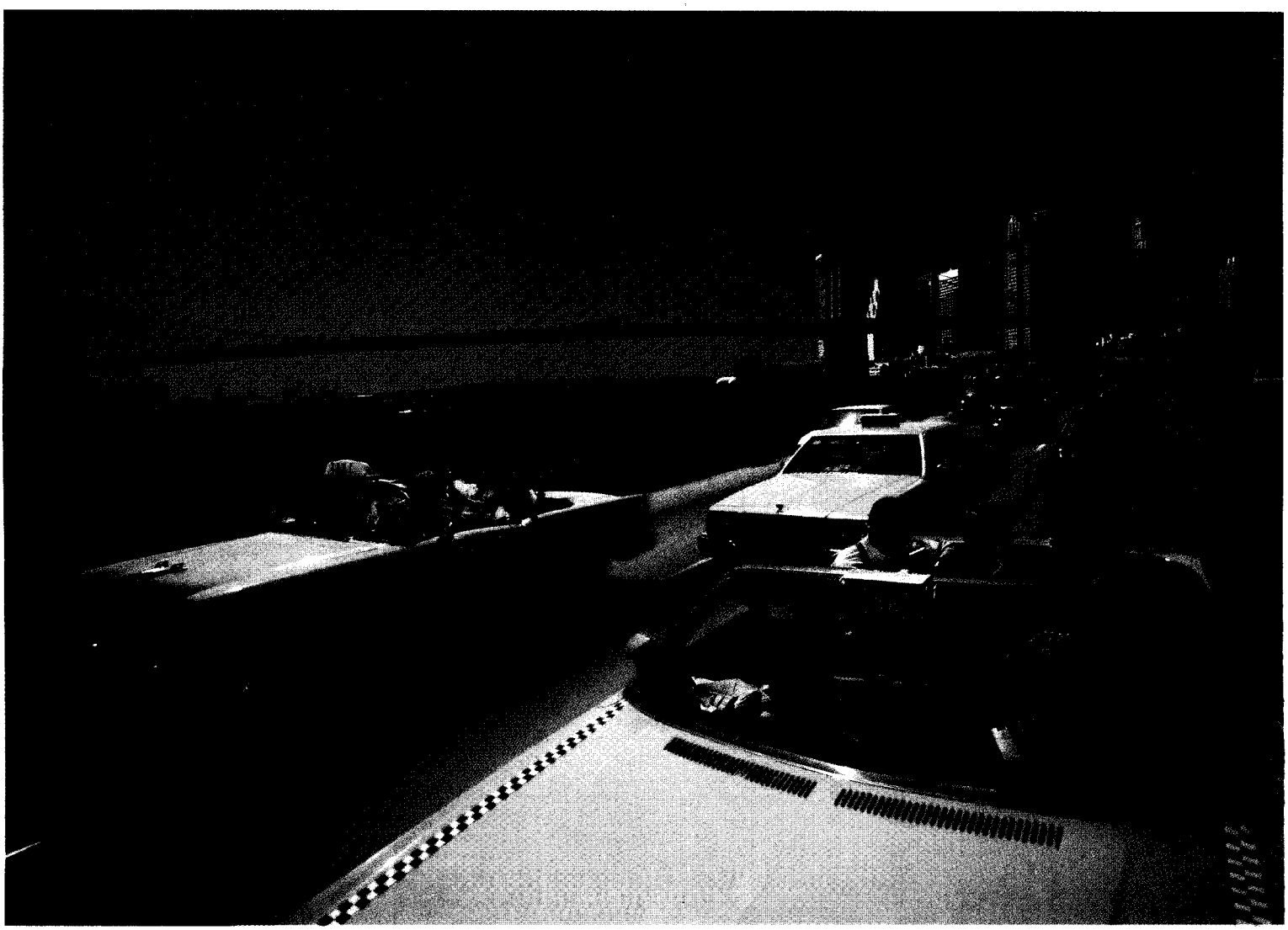

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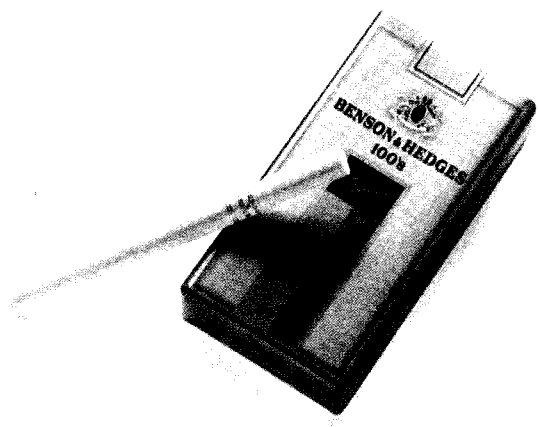

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